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ETCETERA

VOL. TWO NO. ONE

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Lester Dent: The Man Behind The Man

BY BOB PINAHA

Illustration by Paty & Duffy

DOC SAVAGE Copyright 1966 by Street & Smith Publications

Who, you may ask, is Lester Dent? Already, most of you know. He's the creator of the DOC SAVAGE pulps which he wrote and created under the pen name of "Kenneth Robeson" and which lasted from '33 to it's demise in '49.

That's a pretty good, short, and concise definition of who Lester Dent really is. But there's more. Ever since Marvel bought the rights to the character and has been putting his exploits into comic book form, I felt the need for the fans to become more acquainted with who the author really was, for certainly his life was almost as colorful as that of his creation.

To begin with, Lester Dent was born on a small farm two miles northeast of LaPlata, Missouri. Soon after he was born his father, Bern Dent, bought a farm in Oklahoma which they soon left- a year before oil was discovered!! From there, he went to Wyoming and then, after that, back to LaPlata.

As a result of these travels, Dent had little schooling from the fourth to the eighth grades, and when he finally did attend high school, he failed four years of English because of his nearsightedness.

After leaving high school, Dent studied telegraphy at a business college in Chillicothe, and then went to work. In a few years he fell victim to the trend of furthur mechanization in his trade. He tried selling shirts and studied law, but was equally un-

successful in both. Later he returned to telegraphy with a job in the Associated Press office at Tulsa, Oklahoma. It was there that he started his literary career.

One day, Dent found a fellow telegraph writer at his typewriter writing a story. Dent laughed loudly but stopped when he found a check for $400 lying on the operator's desk. The operator had written and sold a confession story.

Inspired by this, Dent wrote 13 stories and sent them to magazines. All were returned. Then he sold a short story to the old Top Notch Magazine for $250. After a few more successes, he sent a 9000 word novel to a New York publishing company. The company called him to New York at $500 a month.

In 1933, Dent created his character DOC SAVAGE, whom he described as a "combination of the clew- following ability of Sherlock Holmes, the muscular tree-swinging ability of TARZAN and the scientific sleuthing of Craig Kennedy."

Within a year there were more than 20 DOC SAVAGE imitators and the character was soon on the radio and on the comic page, while the stories about him were translated into eight languages and published in book form. At the same time, Dent sold other stories such as SAIL (reprinted in Simon and Shuster's Anthology of Great Detective Stories) and TROPICAL DISTURBANCE (reprinted in Ellery Queen's 1966 Anthology) to Black Mask magazine and hardcover novels to Doubleday; DEAD AT THE TAKROFF, LADY TO KILL, LADY AFRAID and LADY SO SILENT!, with stories sold to such prominent magazines as Collier's and The Saturday Evening Post.

Dent's production has been huge. His biggest out-put for only one day was 56,000 words-32,000 by dictaphone and 24,000 by typewriter. Once, through a night, a day and part of the following night, he turned out a 45,000 word novel. He never revised what he wrote and, at one period, he wrote four book-length novels a month for a year.

Once, carrying out a boyish wish to travel by sea, Dent bought a 50 foot schooner and spent three years on it, traveling in the Caribbean Sea and along the Atlantic coast.

He hunted treasure in the Caribbean for a year or so seeking a gold table historically reported to weigh about two tons, which was prepared as a gift by Bodadilla of Cuba for King Alphonso of Spain who had been angered by Bobadilla's mistreatment of Christopher Columbus. The galleon carrying it sunk on a reef of a coral island near Cuba. Dent's search was broken off by a hurricane that piled the boat on a reef. After several days work, Dent and his helper freed the boat and sailed away. Dent was then cured of treasure hunting.

Above: Lester Dent

Dent later sold the boat to a man who knew nothing about sailing. He had learned that annual costs of upkeep for the boat equaled it's value!

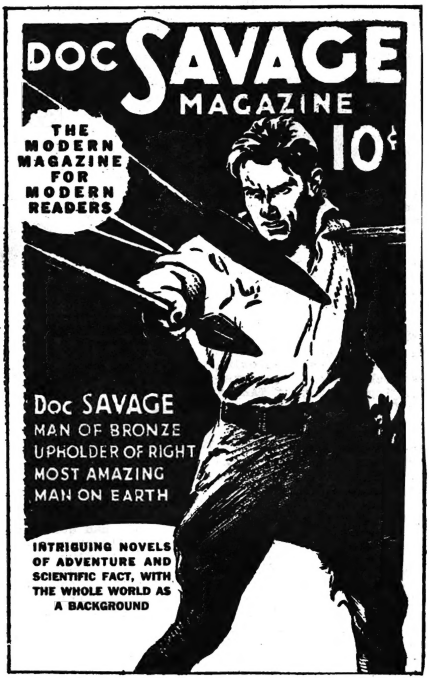
Dent had done exploring in a number of places and was a member of the Explorers Club of New York. He was in Austria when it was annexed by by Germany, then he went to Prague, where the situation was also tense. One afternoon, when he, his wife and his secretary could find nothing to eat, he asked Mrs. Dent, "Couldn't this be one time we are to far away from home?"

Mrs. Dent agreed, so they returned home through Germany, Holland, England and Belgium. Dent had decided to leave war corresponding to others.

While he was writing, Dent has prospected for gold in Old Mexico, Death Valley, Colorado, Arizona and elsewhere.

He has visited almost every state in the Union, Canada, South America and he has flown over Central America and the Caribean Islands.

Dent has recieved recognition for exploration work in the tropics and the pre-historic cliff dwellings of the western United States.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He has been a cowboy, prospector, farmer, teacher, telegraph operator and newspaperman.

He devoted several of his vacations to showing motion pictures and lecturing in northeast Missouri, paying his own expenses and giving all the money from these shows to buy necessities for school children who, due to the drought, might otherwise not be able to attend school.

A big man, in more ways than one, Dent weighed in at 215 pounds and measured six foot two.

But the death of Lester Dent came in 1959 when he died while on a fishing expedition. At the time of his death, he was 54.

Although dead, his memory still lingers on in the hearts of his fans, through his greatest character-creation, DOC SAVAGE- MAN OF BRONZE!!

A post script, if I may---

I slanted this article more toward the author rather than his character, which is deservedly getting recognition through Bantam's reprints of the pulps and Marvels adaptation of the character to comics form, and through the fanzines currently (and in the past) circulating. It best served my intention of a tribute to the man who formed the way for comic books.

Secondly, it is dedicated to Mrs. Dent and Jim Bama (former cover artist of the Bantam reprints) for coming through with a lot of information for a term paper I did while still in high school three years ago.

Thank you.

Breakdown

DOUG MOENCH

Just once I'd like to see a fanzine with an interview that'd go something like this...

GOSH-WOW WORLD: Mr. Kirbanko, I'm sure our readers are interested in learning what kind of tools you utilize in your work.

KIRBANKO: Well, I generally employ a number 335674-S sable brush with a felt tip, but I'll use anything that's laying around when you come right down to it.

GWW: We see. How about paper?

K: Whatever the office sends me. Doesn't matter to me.

GWW: Mm-hm. Well... Concerning your recent epic octology of interrelated books --- the series has been hailed by fans and your fellow pros alike as being one of the most highly original and unique concept developments in the history of the field. Could you elaborate a little upon the genesis of your multi-layered saga?

K: Sure. It arose from an extremely hollow feeling in the pit of my stomach one night while I was watching PLANET OF THE REPROBATES . From there I dipped into the heritage of the old classics like the ILIAD which I had to read for high school and I filched a little from a John Wayne movie I've always liked and of course there are distinct traces of other standard science-fiction, fantasy, mystery, pulp, super- hero, and slapstick themes. And the main character, obviously, is a direct steal from Dashiell Hammet's Sam Spade. Quite a guy, sweetheart.

GWW: Uh...well...uh, you mean the octology is not quite as original and unique as it's cracked up to be?

K: Nope. It's <u>eclectic</u>.

GWW: And you don't mind revealing all these...inspirations?

K: Why should I? Everybody else steals ideas!

GWW: But, does two wrongs make a right?

K: As long as you copyright it with that office in Washington it does!

GWW: Perhaps we'd better move on to another subject. You turn out a phenomenal amount of work per month— I mean, eight books per month is a fantastic achievement. How do you manage to produce all that material?

K: I swipe.

GWW: Swipe?

K: Sure. It goes real fast that way. I can even watch TV while I swipe. Some great shows on this season. 'Course, the soap operas never change that much --- just one long story that never ends. Sort of like my stories. In fact, just last week this episode of GENERAL MORGUE gave me a great idea for my next issue of...

GWW: Getting back to your artwork; do you always swipe?

K: Unless there's no other way. But I generally find some way to swipe just about everything. I use this light- mirror hookup type of machine that projects the subject drawing right down onto my page and all I have to do is trace it!

GWW: Just what is your justification for doing that?

K: Everybody else...

GWW: ...does it? We thought so. Is that practice actually <u>that</u> prevalent?

K: Sure. There are guys swiping from me who don't know even they're swiping a swipe of a swipe of a swipe of a swipe...

GWW: We see, Mr. Kirbanko. Well then, do you sincerely feel that the graphic story medium is an art-form?

K: Are you kidding?

GWW: No, we are not kidding.

K: Well, I'll tell you, staying awake in that drawing chair all day is an art in itself. And hustling my editor for an advance on 78 pages of work is an artform I've developed with supreme finesse.

GWW: Do you see any radical changes in the graphic story field evolving in the future.

K: Not unless somebody stops swiping.

GWW: Since Marvel uses a system differing from most other comic companies --- a system in which the artist actually "writes" the story in a series of panels before giving it to the writer to fill in with word balloons, we were wondering if you ever encountered any difficulties in visually plotting a story under that method?

K: No, I just draw 20 pages of fight scenes and then 2 or 3 face shots in the last panels for the writers to spell out the plot.

GWW: Uh...could that be why we've noticed an imbalance of text in certain panels while others contain nothing but meaningless wise-cracks having nothing to do with the fight that is underway?

K: I don't know. I don't read the books. Once I'm finished with the art, that's it. Clean cups; move down; next seat, heh heh. Besides, I don't concern myself with the writing. Writing is for writers.

GWW: But the writers have to concern themselves with the art. Under the standard formula of scripting, they've always got to come up with visually exciting panel ideas, in their instructions to the artist.

K: Oh, those? I never follow the script. Takes too long to find swipe references for all the things they think up.

GWW: Then why do they even bother writing the scripts?

K: Ask them, sweetheart. I'm not a writer -- except on my octology, of course.

GWW: Yes, how do you go about writing the series? Do you lay each story out in script form first?

K: Are you kidding? I just pick up whatever swipe material's around, copy it, and fill in the balloons with hip talk I hear from my kids.

GWW: But don't you feel an obligation to your fans?

K: Why should I? They rave about what I'm doing as is, pay my fare and hotel bills to and at conventions, give me awards! What's with obligations? I've got a belly to fill!

GWW: Uh...perhaps you might tell us how you got into the business.

K: Sure. I couldn't cut it as a fine artist, or magazine illustrator, so I fake it in comics.

GWW: Could you give us the particulars of your first job?

K: Well, I was sitting in this bar when Wally walked in and collared me and dragged me to some office, I don't know where it was, never did, really; that bar made some mighty fine drinks. Anyway, this guy says, "Can you draw comics?" and I thought he wanted me to do caricatures of Hope and Benny and those guys so I said "No." Then he said, "Well, here's a script; try it anyway! We need the 32 pages by tomorrow noon."

GWW: Did you make the deadline?

K: Sure. I drew a lot of close-ups of eyeballs and helicopter shots of tiny buildings down below and rows of bushes with balloons hanging over them so it looked like the characters were talking on the other side of the bushes. Then I stuck a bunch of extra words in all the balloons to make them bigger and take up more space which eliminated a lot of panel area I would otherwise have had to fill with drawing. Worked out great.

GWW: What do you think of the trend toward relevancy in today's comics?

K: The only relevant thing about comics is that a lot of them are published monthly, giving me a chance to churn out more pages per year. This house didn't grow on a tree, you know, sweetheart.

GWW: Do you ever read any of the many fanzines which are sent to you free?

K: I scan 'em for my name.

GWW: What do you think about the Underground Comix?

K: How much do they pay per page?

GWW: Uh....could we ask who your favorite artists are?

K: The ones who don't use too many lines or much shading -- they're easier to swipe from!

GWW: I think we'd better conclude our interview now, Mr. Kirbanko. We'd like to thank you for graciously allowing us to...

K: Sure, sure, sweetheart. Before you go, could I ask you a question?

CONT. ON PG. 40

Strange, but true, friends, THE MONSTER TIMES is without a doubt the best place to find out about the strange, awesome, slightly perverse world of comics. No other publication, professional or amateur, can survey the field as well as the MONSTER TIMES.

TMT runs reviews, previews, articles, surveys, columns, commentary and scoops all about the world of comic art. We're proud of our achievements in the comics field: TMT was the first publication to reveal the real reason for the cancellation of the late, lamented GREEN LANTERN/GREEN ARROW comic book (TMT 4); THE MONSTER TIMES was the first publication to break the news of National's hiring of Bill Cosby (TMT 6)! And TMT was the first publication to report Marvel's fight against the Wage Price Commission (TMT 5), and the first publication to announce the return of the Big Red Cheese, Captain Marvel, to the world of the living (TMT 13).

Do think that's pretty good for a one-shit, young, bi-weekly tabloid that doesn't even get as much support from the comic fans in the as short months THE MONSTER TIMES has been publishing, we've set the comic world on its ears. We've got the best artists (Jeff Jones, Gray Morrow, Berni Wrightson, Neal Adams, Frank Brunner, Larry Todd Mike Kaluta, Jim Starlin, the best writers (Mary Wollman, Denny O'Neil, Len Wein, Mark Evanier, Tony Isabella, Phil Seuling, Joe Brancatelli Jon Kline, Marty Pasko, Doug Moench, Don and Maggie Thompson) and a whole bagful of other goodies.

And we've got all kinds of advantages that other publications don't have. We're not tied by 15 inch rules to draw the artwork at full size. We're weekly schedule that makes us timely, and best of all, a fresh attitude towards comics. We're not condescending, nor are we awe-struck. We see comics as a phenomenon that should be enjoyed, not ignored and not pandered to. We think we've got the right formula.

Of course, for all your latecomers, we just happen to have a few back issues lying around that you might like to pick up.

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ISSUE 11, PLANET OF THE APES. $1. For starters, how about a Nova Valerie Dracula. Then there's a Mary Wollman interview/review with the movie from First Artists other than Phil Seuling), CONAN of Marvel, review of Gorilla Gallery comic exhibit, Dan Greene comic strip, and of course, PLANET OF THE APES.

Issue 12, GORGEOUS GORGO, $1. Review of the STERANKO'S HISTORY OF COMICS, Gorgo filmbook and centerfold, Beasts of Blood, more Planet of the Apes, SEX, Tomb Tentacle comic strip, Mary Wollman on Mike Kaluta's MOST DANGEROUS GAME rise.

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ISSUE 15, VALLEY OF ORANGO." $1. Bambi Overkill, Mary Wollman's Vampires in the comics, an Alfred Hitchcock checklist, Bill Nelson's Mr. Hyde story of how to make a monster movie, more Dobbins, Tuna'll learn to tune hard and artreview of the Lovecraft fanzine, HPL.

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THE Wandering FAN

TONY ISABELLA

WANNA BUY A SLIGHTLY USED SOUL... REAL CHEAP?

Two weeks ago from the time I type these words (Halloween, if you must know), I was working on my third column for THE BUYER'S GUIDE. Two weeks less two days ago, I flew to Motor City for the Detroit Triple Fan Fair, a common enough action for a comics fan. One week plus one day ago, I returned to Cleveland to find that I was out of a job and facing a long newspaper strike. One week ago, that strike was settled. Last night, I arrived in New York City. Today, I started work at the Marvel Comics Group.

I started work for the Marvel Comics Group.

Do you know what that means?

My interest in the comic book field stems from my admiration for the things that Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko, Don Heck, and Dick Ayers did in 1961- 63. Do you remember the years when those five people were responsible for nearly everything that bore the Marvel label? I learned to love comics from those five artists. I learned to write from Stan Lee. It's akin to a Sir Arthur Conan Doyle fan finding himself in Dr. Watson's position as assistant to the great Holmes himself.

I'm still a bit dizzy from the turn of events that landed a short, fat, Italian funny book freak in what has to be one of the most lusted-after positions in the entire dreamology of fandom. I may not succeed, but at least I was there for a while. And being here has me thinking about the years I've spent in fandom.

I don't apologize for any of my published fan writing. I am a fan and those writings, even the most opinionated and ridiculous meanderings of several years ago, represents a period of growth in me that I'm not about to ignore. We are what we type. That's me in black-and-white-and-occasionally-purple, gang.

I don't apologize for the reviews I handed out, even the most scathing ones. But I think there's a point I've yet to make. For all the bad stories I reviewed, I never denied this ...that there are damn few writers who haven't done a dozen or so stories that I do like. And that's sizable when you consider the conditions these writers work under. Even Gerry Conway, who I've periodically lambasted, has to his credit several excellent stories for DC and is currently doing fine work on SPIDER-MAN and KULL. Okay, so he's done stories I don't like and will probably continue to do stories that I don't. And so will most of the writers in the business.

I don't apologize for my reviews. I think serious criticism of comics writing on a regular basis is important and I hope to see more fan writers trying their hand at it. No art form worth the name can long survive without its critics. Obviously, I cannot review current comics. I don't have the right. I am biased by my job and a thousand other factors. You have the right. I'd like to see less worship and more criticism in fanzines. Even if I'm the target.

My hopes?

Well, I'd like to stay with Marvel and/or in comics. I want to write, but that may have to wait a while. Those are general hopes. I do have a couple of specific hopes.

I'd like to see female characters getting a better treatment in comics. If I've written a lot on this subject lately, it's because it's important. Comics have been ignoring the woman of today or presenting shallow imitations of her. I think it's time we saw more than two kinds of women in comics (Model A-- Edith Bunker, Model B-- Gloria Steinem), I think it's time we saw complex female characters. A lot of male writers are starting to get their heads together on this, but there's a lot to be done. I hope I get an opportunity to do my part.

CONT. PG. 15

Revival-Survival

ROGER SLIFER

Since this is the first installment of my column for this zine (makes sense, this being the first issue of ETCETERA) I'll explain what this column is all about. It is, in essence, the place where I discuss old characters and discontinued books that have been brought back from comics limbo and their chances for survival in today's competitive market. Hence, it's somewhat questionable title: Revival- Survival. So, without further explanation, lets dig right in.

DC has finally done it! After all the new books being brought out by Marvel, I was beginning to wonder if National was going to take it lying down. But, DC has retaliated! After promising us the original CAPTAIN MARVEL, the SHADOW and SWORD OF SORCERY, The Comic Reader (ETCETERA's companion magazine) now announces that DC is now reviving the 100 Page Super Spectaculars and 9 regular size reprint books.

I'm glad to see the 100 Pagers back for a couple of reasons. First off, through them we got a chance to look at a lot of the choice Golden Age material put out by both DC and Quality during the forties, without paying an arm and a leg out to some dealer. We also saw stuff reprinted in the Super Spectaculars and in back of the 25¢ers from our Golden Age--the early and mid-sixties. But why, you ask, would we want to see material from this period? For this reason: Comic books are being now put out to a new generation of readers who haven't yet seen books like The HAWK and DOVE, DIAL H FOR HERO, etc. And, if this material is well liked and accepted by this new generation we stand a better chance of seeing our old favorites being revived. And if these series do well enough and draw good enough mail response for a revival, the new collector is happy the old collector is happy and most important of all, the publisher is happy! So, put up with these recent reprints...it'll all work out for the best for everybody in the end.

The next thing I'd like to discuss is one of the 20¢ size reprint books DC is giving us: The LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES. After being pushed out of ADVENTURE COMICS by SUPERGIRL and crammed into back-up strips in ACTION COMICS and SUPERBOY in a now you see them, now you don't basis we now, at long last, get to see them in their own reprint comic with (hopefully) a chance to see booklength stories again.

Remember all the great things that were done with the LSH's strip in ADVENTURE? Remember the revival of MON-EL? Remember the death of LIGHTNING LAD? Remember the establishment of a new LEGION headquaters after the old one was demolished by the FATAL FIVE? Remember? Remember... It seemed that while most of DC's comic heroes during that period of time were embarking on brief adventures and in which everything was status quo at the end of each issue the LEGION stories were always introducing new characters and finding new ways to harass the old ones. Memories come back of LIGHTNING LAD's metal arm, BOUNCING BOY's lost power, DUO DAMSEL's hopeless love for SUPERBOY, et al.

It's these kind of things that I would like to see in the LEGION OF today. And why should DC come out with a reprint book unless there is at least a possibility of it going all new? Of course,if they do go all new, the first thing they would have to do would be to induct SUPERBOY back into active membership in the LEGION. This obviously would be for sales; because, no matter how good a comic is inside, the bubblegum brigade (who are the ones that support the book financially) aren't going to pick up and buy the comic unless they see something they are familiar with and the SUPERMAN emblem is something everyone from ages nine to ninety is familiar with.

Okay. So out of necessity we once again inducted SUPERBOY into the LEGION. But, if the editor wants to keep the number of members down by keeping the 26 member limit rule (established in ACTION #387), who gets the boot and how? My suggestion would be SHADOW LASS, and for these reasons. It was already established in ADVENTURE #354 (the ADULT LEGION story) that she would die saving the

CONT. ON PG. 16

"Welcome to Rutland, Vt..."

Once Upon A Hallowe'en!

BY TOM FAGAN
PHOTOS BY NICK MARRO

From barbarians to bat-people... they gathered in Rutland.

Their aim -- to celebrate the Celtic New Year which, should your knowledge of Irish lore be scant, is Hallowe'en.

An inkling the 1972 Vermont celebration might be a wee bit larger than usual came after Hallowe'en stories featuring the Rutland Parade and "that party" appeared in the THOR, BEAST and JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA books. Phone calls and letters asking to attend began in a trickle and turned into a torrent. The answer was, "Yes, be here the 28th then!" This in addition to well over a hundred invitations stamped with a Cthulhu Seal of R'lyeh (designed by Eleanor Mitchell and printed by Bill G. Wilson) already sent through the mails, along with numerous personal and telephone invitations extended by party host and parade chairman, namely this writer.

For a weekend, then, Rutland was a "comic book nation". Well over 600 strong we gathered to party and salute, in our own way, the comic book industry. There were fans and pros, knowns and unknowns, freaks and heads and, yes, even the establishment, one of whom had a hard time convincing people she wasn't "Pearl Buck". (Thanks for being there and lending us a needed hand, Elizabeth.)

Earliest to arrive was Frank Miller of Montpelier, Vermont, and editor of the zine, Epic, who had come not only to help with painting float backdrops, but to appear as the PHANTOM STRANGER. He "materialized" on the steps of Cthulhu House (the party scene) early Friday afternoon. And others came in the evening, and still more throughout the wee hours of Saturday morning (do you like your parties at 4 a.m.?---we did) and it was only the beginning as arrivals came from as faraway as Maryland, Deleware and Minnesota, not to mention all o New England, New York State, New Jersey and Pennslyvania.

However, it was the 13th annual parade, and we might have known something would happen. Despite threatening skies, we kept on with our costuming and when we were through it was as if comic book pages, old and new, had come alive.

To name all would be like a listing of Who's Who In Comicsville. To name a few will give you an idea of the colorful congregation. The costuming was magnificent and better yet authentic.

"New" FLASH stared in amazement as "Old" FLASH zoomed into the room. The Golden Age ATOM (Todd Elkin of Williamsville, NY) confronted Darkseid and DeSaad, who had journyed not from Apokolips but from Deleware.

Barbarians? Well, for starters there were ELRIC and MOONGLUM, the former drawing a sword which howled as it cleared the scabbard. CONAN faced Tulsa Doom, whose skull face mocked his disdain. Even KING KULL was there!

Like women wearing identical dresses to a party, two BIG BARDAs sized up one another. GREEN ARROW (aka Harvey Sobel) groaned, "Oh, no!" as two other emerald archers made their appearances. Three G.A.'s but only two BLACK CANARY's...how come?

The CAT arrived to later confront TIGER WOMAN. LUKE CAGE grinned good naturedly as he faced his double. And yes, there was even a green-skinned HULK, torn purple trousers and all. CHEECH WIZARD represented the underground comics; HOPALONG CASSIDY the films, The SHADOW the pulps and CHARLIE BROWN the newspaper strips. The SCARLET WITCHes had the RED Skull cowering before their double whammy.

BATMAN, his face grim, eyed the skies, he had reason to worry. Blame it on the Joker and Lokei or chalk it up to unkind fate and Hela, but the rain fell. Not even ODIN and Electric Hefty could halt the cancellation of the parade. Alfred E. Neuman living up to his motto, "What Me Worry?" accepted the decision philosophically.

However, heroes make the best of any situation. Returning to Cthulhu House over which waved the black flag of The Night Legion, the party began anew..even more festive than before. The old Mid-Victorian mansion, a candlelight and cocktail setting of yore, now welcomed the likes of WEREWOLF BY NIGHT, the SPIDER-WOMAN; SUPERBABY, SUPERBOY and a modern - day bearded SUPERMAN, and a trio of DRACULAs.

DON'T WALK
NIGHT HAWK

ONCE UPON A HALLOWE'EN CONT.

Who can forget such instances as the HULK re-greening his torso with vegetable dye and declaring, "Green is beautiful, man!" "HOPPY", with guns drawn, throwing down on surprised couples. Glynis Wein as SUPERGIRL. The SHADOW chortling behind Alan Lee Weiss, "I just gotta rap with somebody about floats!" The Scarecrow of Romney admitting he was from Hudson Street in Brooklyn, and ZORRO owning up to Franklyn Square, New York, as home ground.

There were mid-night trips to the dam; wonder about the wheresbouts of MR. MIRACLE and the FOREVER PEOPLE who had started for Rutland the night before; news the Grim Reaper had driven his car off the road while on the way from Teaticket, Mass., a gas-masked SANDMAN from the 40's; a power failure delighted some and confounded others, and all sorts of party touches, including Ellen Vartanoff's present of boomerangs. Even though DAREDEVIL was missing, the gifts were quickly claimed.

Food and drink were in abundance, the latter in short supply by three a.m., but then even Canaan is said to have gone dry. There was conversation and music beneath decorations both traditional and modern...jack-o-lanterns ogling huge posters of BATMAN and NIGHTHAWK. But best of all there were new friends to be met and old friendships to be renewed.

And the people...ah, the people. Of all ages and occupations they kept coming...and coming...and coming, new waves of them on the hour---every hour through the evening and on and on into Sunday morning.

The time of departure. Goodbyes and promises to return in '73 and "Is it okay if I bring a couple of friends with me next year?" (It is... we expect a thousand people this Hallowe'en to come!!) Cars whirling out of the circular driveway; people hitchhiking along roadways. Cthulhu House strangely quiet...the last Hallowe'en for comic bookdom there symbolized by the clean-up discovery of three broken arrows and G.A.'s farewell message of: "I QUIT!" A new place to be found to welcome back old and new acquaintances next October.

Was there a parade in 1972? Yes, it boomed into being on Hallowe'en night itself. True, there were fewer comic book characters to ride the floats and greet the crowds, but in spirit everybody was there. At least that's the way those of us actually in cowls and capes felt as we raised gloved hands in our yearly, traditional tribute...to the spirit of All Hallows and to the magic of Comic Art!

WANDERING FAN CONT.

I'd like to see a good mystery comic, not horror or the supernatural mystery. The great detectives. The cops- and- robbers. The locked room murder mystery. Are you listening, Roy?

I'd like to make a billion dollars retire at 23, and have my own radio show on which I would interview myself nightly. I only said they were specific hopes... not realistic.

I'd like to remain active in fandom to some extent, but that depends mostly on what my duties at Marvel involve. For obvious reasons, I have to give up the news column I was slated to do for GRAPHIC STORY WORLD. Roy Thomas at Marvel, Joe Brancatelli at THE MONSTER TIMES and Carmine Infantino and the editors at National were all great to me and I hope they'll treat my successor with the graciousness they treated me. As for Jim Warren, well...we still love you, Jim.

My column in THE BUYER'S GUIDE? I don't think I'll have the time to continue it, but I will find a replacement that will ease the pain of my departure. And the first one that says he does it better than I did gets a typewriter in the labonza.

And then there's TRUE FAN ADVENTURE THEATRE...

TRUE FAN ADVENTURE THEATRE #8, which will be out about January 25, is our special "Politics and the Fan" issue. See an office hungry psychiatrist condemn comics fandom at a graduation. See a warrior-fan battle totalitarianism on Mars. See the candidate for vice-president endangered when the world learns he was once a fan. See the Right Guard---they make John Wayne look like a liberal---as they do their bit to send a slothful fan into permanent gafia from life. Rated "N" for Nonsensical! No one admitted without a self-destruct mechanism.

And, if you think that's weird, wait'll you see issue #9, our special "Fan War Against Crime" issue.

And, coming soon, a photo feature of Paul Levitz diving thru his piles

i.e.-

Greetings.

Welcome to the first issue of the all new ETCETERA. As you may (or may not, for that matter) know, ETCETERA started out originally back in Febuary of 1971 as an all news magazine. It was edited by Paul Levitz and myself for five months until I parted company with Paul for reasons of my own and Paul continued the mag on his own.

Since then, ETCETERA has undergone numerous changes.

First, in December of 1971, Paul was able to aquire the rights to the title of fandom's oldest and most reliable newszine, THE COMIC READER. Paul combined the two names, and from that point on, ETC./TCR took off and up! After several months of the double titles, the names were split and I was handed ETCETERA to edit in the form of an article zine.

So much for the run- down on the history of ETCETERA! I don't want to ramble on here with pages upon pages of editorial bull. But, I would like to say that I'm happy to be doing ETCETERA and I hope that I can do a good job on the book and that I don't disappoint you.

In the ads that we ran in RBCC and The Buyer's Guide we advertised that ETCETERA would contain only 40 pages. As you can see, the book contains 44 pages. Why? Well, it wound up that I received more articles and features then I had originally planned. Since I couldn't decide what to cut... I didn't! Instead I added on pages.

In those same ads there was mention of articles by Mark Evanier Gary Brown and Jim Glenn that would appear in this issue. Unfortunately, due to personal reasons, they couldn't make it for the first issue. Hopefully, the advertised articles will appear next issue.

To make up for the empty space, I've added a report on Creation II, (complete with three full pages of photos), a report on the 1972 Hallowe'en party/parade up in Rutland, Vermont by Tom Fagan along with two pages of photographs. "Revival-Survival" by Roger Slifer and "Breakdown" by Doug Moench. I certainly hope that these will make up for the missing articles.

Contributions are, of course, welcomed. Articles should be sent typed on double spaced pages. Art and spot illos should be sent inked and sizes should be approximately 4" x5". Letters of comment are also welcomed and wanted for the letters column that will begin next issue.

This issues cover is by Dave Cockrum. This piece, featuring David Innes and Dian of Pellucidar, was the piece Dave used to try to land the Pellucidar strip at National. (The characters on the cover are copyright 1973 by Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc.)

Many thanks go to associate editor Steve Gilary (who says that his pay will be thanks enough) for all his help on the book.

Thanks go also to the Brooklyn Barbarians, without whom this issue couldn't have been collated.

And to you readers, a Happy (belated) Chanukah, Christmas and New Year!

Na Zdrowie,
paul

REVIVAL- SURVIVAL CONT.

Science Asteroid. So DC could just carry through with this idea. Then, to relieve the LEGION of so many SUPERBOY-type powered heroes they could write out MON-EL (in his grief over SHADOW LASS' death he could leave to help colonize new planets). This would not only pave the way for SUPERBOY's return, but also leave one space open in the roster for a brand new LEGIONAIRE, which itself presents endless possibilities. For instance, there could be a series of LEGION adventures with one- shot heroes in order to find the right "replacement" for MON-EL. I realize a lot of you would be against this whole plan at first because both MON-EL and SHADOW LASS are good characters. But if you would think on the ideas I've presented I think you would agree that the good points out-weigh the bad.

That about sums up my thinking on the LEGION and I've have wasted enough of your time this issue. Any comments on the LSH (or anything else for that matter) would be greatly appreciated. Let me leave you with this one final thought: from the way editor Boltinoff talks in SUPERBOY #192 of the way they've been searching for Jim Shooter, maybe the LEGION's return to greatness is closer than we think!

THE JUNGLE LORD CAPER

TARZAN's latest comic- book incarnation in Joe Kubert's adaptation has alot going for it. My overall impression of the series is that it is a considered effort and that it is very 'comic-booky'. In many ways its strengths and weaknesses indicate those of most current pro comics. Certainly, Adams' version of BATMAN or his DEADMAN or Marvel's CONAN are not representative of what is going down in comics today. Somehow DC's TARZAN is. Let's look at the two sides it displays in an effort to gain a useful perspective on how things stand generally in the pro industry at the moment.

The greatest strength and asset of the series is it's got real flash and verve- it moves well- tells it story visually- there's lots of action and pretty colors to complement it. There is a concious balance of words and pictures. Most TARZAN stories can be told primarily in pictures needing little, if any, verbal explanation.

Kubert' s acknowledgement of the visual nature of his material puts his adaptation way ahead of Marvel's CONAN. Thomas and Smith have taken unnatural liberties with the comic medium in their adaptation. Every issue looks progressively like text plus illustrations rather than a comic book. Could they be making the mistake of equating the number of words on a page with degree of literary merit? Kubert is conveying a more accurate impression of the feeling of Burroughs' writing the more he de-emphasizes text in favor of visual progressions. Marvel is just cramming in as much of Howard's prose as can fill a page.

Kubert is also experienced and skilled enough to avoid two easy problems. He has decided to take the impressionistic approach to jungle scenery relieving him of alot of tedious botanical drawing, ala Hogarth, and he employs design techniques in his art that interrupts the monotone of a literal interpretation of reality to add variety to the visuals. This is something artists like Murphy Anderson have never really dealt with in their work. Effects like blank backgrounds, violent perspectives , inset panels and extreme close-ups do serve to further the action by expanding our means of perception just a bit to lend emphasis. It is characteristic of the artist of FIREHAIR to solve both these problems with elements of comic book language that enable him to do less drawing while gaining impact. We can expect to see more design solutions in TARZAN.

Most important to the success of series is that a feeling of high epic high adventure be created and sustained. This is perhaps what more and more people are looking to comics today to supply them with. This type of fantasy is perfectly suited to the rudiments of comic book presentation. On this score, CONAN loses out again to TARZAN. While the feeling of epic high adventure runs deep in Howard's original material, Thomas does little to enhance its flavor and movement in his adaptations by relying heavily on literal transcriptions of text and dialouge. Comics are primarily visual. With material as visually conceived as TARZAN and CONAN it would seem to let the pictures best run their course and build on that. Kubert has been successful in allowing his stories to build up momentum primarily through his drawings and keep ing his writing to a bare minimum; and we can suggest that CONAN would be less of a chore to write and read if it did more of the same.

On the far side of the scales, DCs TARZAN displays equally as well the predominant weakness of comics in general today. To gain an adaquate assessment from TARZAN of this predicament, we must be as objective in our observations as possible and take the long view more often than not. What do we see from out in the future when we can glance ahead into what could be? We see TARZAN as a case of brillant, artistic means applied to shallow subject matter— we see an artist employed on material far below his full capacity of expression- a medium constricted by its format- a giant stuffed into pygmy's boots. The Kubert version of the jungle lord comes on top of a long history of [illegible] very sympathetic and successful [illegible] those of Hal [illegible] and Russ Mann- [illegible] realistic ap- [illegible] Many fans are no [illegible] and delighted to en- [illegible] artistic rendering.

Above: the cover from the first issue of DCs TARZAN. Note the impressionistic approach that Joe Kubert uses in his jungle scenery.

Below: Burne Hogarth's jungle scenery is just the opposite of what Kubert does. Hogarth uses dense foliage.

(C) 1958 by ER BURROUGHS INC.

However even here Kubert comes out on top of two very sympathetic, and even successful, impressionistic renderings. Jesse Marsh's years on TARZAN for Dell- Western and Joe Spiegle's handling of KORAK at Gold Key. So one of the most outstandingly skilled and innovative artists in comics today is covering ground already well trodden.

Also working against this TARZAN becoming a classic graphic story is that all the material is composed of melodrama and sterotypes. This does not deny TARZAN is a great and classic concept, it is. But it's still melodrama. Kubert is capable of much deeper and truely human sensitivity as a certain other handful of artists are also. It's past due for comics to be putting their best efforts into epic high adventure melodrama. Our age no longer subscribes to those innocent ideals that make those old stories reality. Both Foster and Hogarth will probably remain the definite rendering of TARZAN because the artists were participants in an age that believed in the ideals of epic heroes and helpless maidens. Our age no longer subscribes to those ideals. Our attraction to those ideals can only be a nostalgic fantasy of a simpler time. The re-emergence of TARZAN is part of a trend in comics now. The best energy in the pro field seems to be alloted to indulging our necrophiliac desire for contact with the past. CONAN, DOC SAVAGE, SWAMP THING, SHADOW, DRACULA and

TARZAN (C) 1973 by E.R. BURROUGHS INC.

IN AN INSTANT, TARZAN WAS PAST THEM AND—
—SAILING JUBILANTLY TOWARDS THE JUNGLE.
AT LAST, IT SEEMED, THEY WERE FREE.
TARZAN AND HIS MEN MOVED WARILY INTO THE JUNGLE UNTIL THEY REACHED THE SPOT WHERE THE WOOLLIES HAD SHORTLY BEFORE ATTACKED.
BUT AT LAST THEY WERE SAFE FROM PURSUIT. "WHAT NOW?" ASKED A MAN. "WE LOOK AS IF WE ARE AS BADLY OFF HERE AS WE WERE IN THE MINE."
H. FOSTER
TARZAN WAS WORRIED. WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO HIS FOLLOWERS?

Left: The page at the left is a good example of the work of Hal Foster, the Ape Man's original artist. This page shows TARZAN in action (panel one) and, in panels three through five, we see examples of Foster's use and style of jungle scenery.

WEREWOLF and the constant resuscitating BATMAN all lead me to this conclusion.

If those considerations were not enough to dampen most of the challenging aspects for Joe Kubert doing TARZAN, we can add that the one area that Kubert excels in sensitive three-dimensional characterizations is something that can not be easily developed in any of Burroughs' material. His stories rely on carrying the reader deeper and deeper into fantastic premises of beast-men and hidden worlds with highly charged tales of action and not so much with well thought out and developed characters. Burroughs' adventure stories are some of the most literate, determining the bent and direction of comic book writing throughout it's entire existence. The minor characters are only very lightly drawn, even for Kubert; they require very little attention. And, even the major characters (including TARZAN himself) never seem quite sure of what they are suppose to be feeling. His expressions reflect a restless desire to be placed into situations that force him to react with emotions other than 'animal passion', 'haughty disdain' or 'outrage'. This wasteland of emotional substance is common to all comics today and may explain why Kubert seems to get carried away in dwelling upon the more bizarre aspects of his material such as, "My mother the Ape ... she's dead!! What will I do now?!" and the two scenes, one issue apart, of men tied to the sacrificial burning posts in #210 and #212. Kubert isn't alone in being an artist searching for some way to make his material meaningful to himself. Neal Adams is now well known for his overemphasis of particular emotions and facial expressions, such as pain and extreme anger or disgust.

None of this is to put down what DC is doing in the least. This title simply displays some of the crying needs of comics in this period of its growth. It is significant so much enthusiasm is being generated over a non-super hero character. Another crying need of comics is to expand into larger formats. The treatment TARZAN receives in the newspaper strips has it over the comicbook version in that at least for one page it has a large area to work with. The original artwork can be drawn large enough to create a better thought out fantasy world that produces a more

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A Spanner In the Cogs

BY STEVE UTLEY JR.

Noticed anything ... peculiar ... in dealers' rooms lately, heh, heh?"

I overheard the following interesting snatch of conversation while making the rounds at a convention a year or two ago:

"..... yeah man, all you gotta do is send a Golden Age comic to this printing outfit in Formosa. They'll make an exact copy of it ---- as many as you want, for mere pennies each! And in full color, too, the works! And they have ways of aging the duplicates so's the paper gets all brown and crumbly and old-looking, and ya really can't tell it from the original. A guy could make a killing!!"

I passed on, suddenly determined to settle for nothing less than a full-scale massacre. I presented the little idea that had popped into my head to Bentfin Bova Boy Howard Waldrop (who is a vastly more prolific, Dirty Neo - Pro than I, and who will run wild in the streets with any notion which goes against Absolute Verities, such as Gravity and Taxes). "Howard," said I, "imagine what damage might be done with two hundred... two thousand flawlessly authentic-seeming copies of early issues of MARVEL MYSTERY COMICS! Or ALL-STAR COMICS! Or, Gawddamn, whole handcart loads of E.C. science-fiction titles! Flooding the market! Knocking the ass end right off of comics fandom's values!"

"Massive cardiac arrest among collectors and dealers once the truth was made known!" Howard exulted, eyes agleam with malice as he savored the sheer audacity of the scheme.

"And we don't have to stop with Golden Age stuff!" I went on. "We could get the going price for FANTASTIC FOUR No. 1, THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN and the rest of those goodies down to seventy -five cents per copy!

"Which would naturally cause prices on later issues to plummet proportionately!"

"And we could do pulp magazines galore--"

"And BIG LITTLE BOOKS--"

"And Arkham House first editions"

"And Edgar Rice Burroughs..."

"And pretty soon after we let the word out about these copies, Howard, very soon indeed, (cackle cackle), it will come to the point where the poor schlepps who've been shelling out twenty, fifty--- a hundred bucks per 'collector's item' won't touch even the real McCoys for more'n a buck or so each. Because no one will want to run the risk of getting stuck---expensively so -- with a funny book that's printed on imitation disintegrating paper with imitation fading four colors and imitation rusting staples, not when what he really wants is the very same funny book printed on authentic disintegrating paper with authentic fading---"

"Haw haw, let's do it, man!"

We did, too. It took months of discreet investigation upon the part of one of Howard's old army buddies, now living in Japan, to locate that printing outfit in Formosa. While we waited for that to pay off, Howard and I sat down at our respective typewriters and knocked out two perfectly raunchy, pupe-munching pornographic novels each in six weeks time, signed the same pseudonym to all four books and sold the lot to the right people for forty-five hundred dollars. Aforesaid monies, along with a little bread collected from close friends who hurrahed and buzzahed this Golden Oppurtunity to Screw Things Up Royally, provided our capital.

Six months later, we quietly began to dump the duplicates on the market: spurious ALL - STAR COMICS, ersatz TALES FROM THE CRYPT, counterfeit WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY, out and out phoney THUN'DAs. A dozen here, fifty there, a hundred someplace else; in all, five thousand, count 'em FIVE OH OH OH, beautifully faked funny books. We dumped them at slashed prices. We dumped them with totally deadpan expressions, got away quickly as the unknowing dealers snickered up their sleeves and thought, "Dumb shits!" and howled and convulsed in the privacy of our hotel rooms. We, the Magic Christians of fandom, had pulled it off and were getting away with it!! Oh, gorgeousity!!! It was well worth twice the money we'd blown

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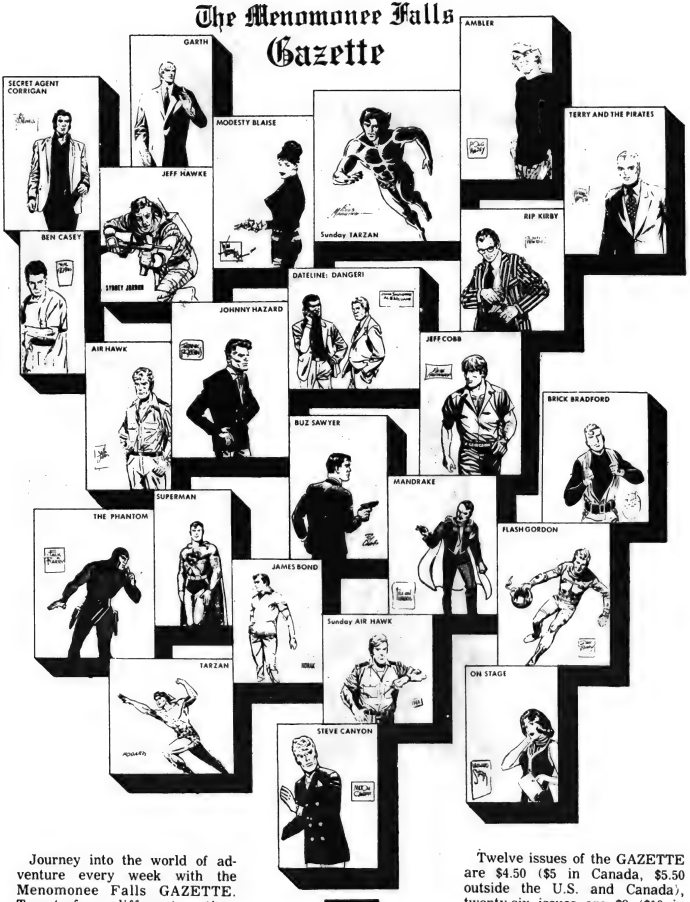

Journey into the world of adventure every week with the Menomonee Falls GAZETTE. Twenty-four different action-packed adventures every week. The best in art and story. Packed and produced for the comic art fan. Adventure--every week!

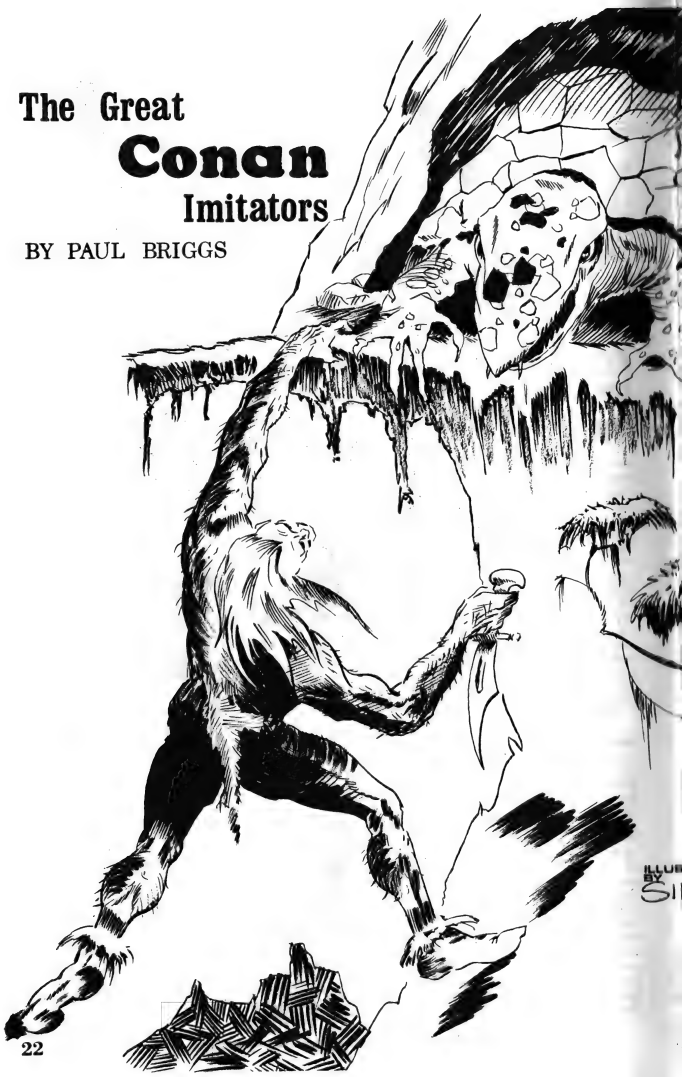
ST
street enterprises

Twelve issues of the GAZETTE are $4.50 ($5 in Canada, $5.50 outside the U.S. and Canada), twenty-six issues are $9 ($10 in Canada, $11 outside the U.S. and Canada), and a full year of 52 issues is $17 ($19 in Canada, $21 outside).

N85 W16505 Mary Court Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin 53051

The Great Conan Imitators

BY PAUL BRIGGS



I suppose I could start this column off with some trite story explaining how I came to write it. But, since such a thing annoys both readers and editors alike, I won't do it. (I mentioned doing it merely to unnerve the fellow who will proof-read this column).

This first column will concern itself with a few of the lesser known CONAN imitations which you might encounter lurking inside paperbacks. The first one is to be found in LORD OF BLOOD by Dave Van Arnam, (74688) for 75¢, published by Lancer in 1970. It is a sequel to a book called STAR BARBARIAN, which, unfortunately missed. With a title like LORD OF BLOOD and with a ferocious Steranko cover, you'd expect this novel to be a gore-drenched winner. But, it would seem that author Van Arnam dislikes violence and gore. He uses every opportunity to avoid getting his character involved in violent acts. Even when he's finally forced to inject his hero into sword fights or battles with killer lions, the passages are few and vague, and you can almost imagine the hero falling asleep along with you. And when he comes to describing battle scenes between huge armies of mercenaries, Van Arnam still manages to eliminate the use of violence. When surrounded by an enemy force of superior numbers, the mercenaries in this novel will not fight to a heroic and bloody death à la Howard. They will promptly surrender, and, perhaps even try to offer their services to the enemy commander. Probably this is much more realistic when you consider the loyalty mercenaries have shown towards causes in the past, but this is supposed to be heroic fantasy!

This book follows the adventures of Jamnar, a dispossessed king, who becomes a slave, then a soldier and at last, at the end of the book, he takes over the throne of the king he'd been forced to serve. A somewhat familiar plot, but then, most heroic fantasy plots are similar. It takes a good writer to manipulate and embellish an old plot to make it enjoyable, but Van Arnam fails in this respect. He tries to carry the book through with mainly weak characterization...it is just convincing nor is it entertaining.

The next book is SLAVE OF SARMA (75-305) by Jeffrey Lord, from Macfadden Bartell, published in 1970. This is one in a series of books concerning the adventures of Richard Blade, a member of the British Secret Service who journeys, with the aid of a computer, to other demensional worlds. This time around, an enemy agent, who just happens to be an exact double of Blade, travels to one of those other worlds and Blade is right behind him, encountering sword fights, giant crabs and nymphomaniacs.

This book is an erotic sword and sorcery novel which blends the best of CONAN and James Bond. The first portion of the book is a good, if somewhat grisly, spy thriller. When Blade enters the other demension, we are then involved in a fast-moving heroic fantasy adventure, although there is no real fantasy or sorcery in the novel,

unless you want to count the demensional computer's amazing abilities. As far as I know,there are three other Richard Blade books. They are: THE BRONZE AXE (60-376), THE JADE WARRIOR (75-246) and JEWEL OF THARN (75-272). All four books are 75¢ each.

The next story we come to is only a novelette, but one of unique interest. It is a Conan adventure by Ray Bradbury, but it's not the same barbaric Cimmerian created by Robert E. Howard, though it is an obvious imitation. You may have seen this story briefly mentioned in Steranko's History of Comics. It's called LORELEI OF THE RED MIST, and it was coauthored by Leigh Brackett back in 1946.

The story concerns Hugh Starke, a Terran criminal, who crash-lands on Venus and wakes up to find his mind inside the body of a powerfully- muscled Venusian warrior by the name of CONAN. From there, Starke finds himself involved in gory battles, and confronting living dead men and the deadly magic of a witch on this oddly beautiful world.

This was an excellent story!

LORELEI OF THE RED MIST was written before Bradbury had a big name as a writer and before he had a preference for poetic words over plot. Although this one has a strong plot, it is obvious that Bradbury's poetic prose added to the story's effectiveness.

The novelette is written in the best tradition of Burroughs and Howard. Bradbury and Brackett's Venus, with it's strange gaseous ocean where no man can drown, is as exotic and beautiful as any world Burroughs ever created. And, the action scenes are handled with a tongue-in-cheek ferocity Howard would have been proud of. An example from a battle scene: "....An enemy cannot fight without hands. One, facing Starke, suddenly displayed violent stumps before his face, not believing them...."

I don't know if LORELEI OF THE RED MIST was reissued in recent years in paperback form, but I have a copy of it in a 1958 paperback anthology. In case you'd like to try tracking down this particular edition, it's an anthology containing two other stories by Sturgeon and Heinlein, and it's called THREE TIMES INFINITY, edited by Leo Margulies, from Fawcett, (d1680). It was 50¢ way back in 1958, but if Fawcett's reissued it I don't know what they're asking for it now.

FLAME WINDS by Norvell W. Page, from Berkly, 60¢. Though supposedly based on the Prester John legend, the hero of this book, Wan Tengri, is really inspired by Howard's Cimmerian, this time involved in a battle with a city full of wizards in a novel written originally in 1939. This one is interesting because of the personality of the hero, a boasting wild-eyed fighter who roars about his own magnificence. Though his bragging may become tiresome, he certainly does manage to live up to his boasts when it comes to smashing skulls, slicing flesh and spilling blood. Some of his exploits may be vaguely familiar to CONAN fans, though they are told with a fresh, impressive style every bit as swift and forceful as Wan Tengri himself. Yet these exploits are not overly familiar; Page livens them up with some good fantasy element and, most important, with a sardonic humor very well suited to the violent events he relates.

THE SERPENT (95¢), ATLAN (95¢), THE CITY (75¢) by Jane Gaskell, all from Paperback Library. These three books are a trilogy relating the adventures of one Cija- a princess caught up in some rather bizarre story-line in the earth's pre-historic era, whatever that means. If it means finding Atlantis still above water , gorged with a writhing mass of monsters, sorcerers and thunderously clashing armies, then these three books have provided all that was neccessary to fit the definition and much more.

Cija herself is not a female imitation of CONAN. Oh yes, she has her courageous moments but she has no ability to wield a sword, much less the strength to even lift one. No, she is a regular heroine, perhaps more human and believable than others, even though her adventures are not particularly ordinary. But she does act as a magnet and this lovely damsel attracts to herself a huge sword - swinging horde of cutthroats during the course of this three volume epic and they all bear a slight resemblance to a certain Cimmerian. Mercenaries, thieves, rapists, generals, kings,soldiers..they all appear on the scene at one time or another and get their chance to act heroically, even though some of them may not exactly be called good guys!

Along with this collection of pseudo-Cimmerians, Miss Gaskell provides a monstrous plot tha may seem very confusing when you get to page 400 of the first volumme,if you have not forgotten it by then. Yet, Miss Gaskell manipulates her bigger than

CONT. ON PG. 32

WHAT TRUE FAN ADVENTURE THEATER HAS DONE FOR TRUTH, JUSTICE, AND THE AMERICAN WAY

In issue #1, we printed a daring expose of how the notorious Howard Rookoffski was getting $200 for a copy of Double Malted, a particularly fattening piece of pornography.

In issue #2, we revealed how even a normal healthy young girl could be led from the path of righteousness and become a comic fan.

In issue #3, we detailed the shocking story about how his depraved lust for comics drove a fan to suicide.

In issue #4, we proved that swiping another man's poses could be hazardous to a fan artist's health.

In issue #5, the respected Rev. Crossman selected our journal to speak out against the 7 deadly sins of fandom.

In issue #6, the renown Dr. Decker released his psychological survey of comic fans at conventions and in their native habitats.

In issue #7, we told the heart-rending story of how a formerly harmless mimeograph machine was driven to murder after years of maltreatment by its owners, comic fans all.

The staff of TRUE FAN ADVENTURE THEATER wants to continue its three years of service in outlining the dangers of comic book fandom to an unwary public. We are now campaigning to have all comic books and fanzines labeled "Warning: the Surgeon General is pretty sure prolonged reading is hazardous to your health."

But TRUE FAN ADVENTURE THEATER needs your help. We need your nickels and dimes to carry on our crusade. Order issue #8 of this vital journal today. It's a special Political Deviants Issue that exposes the harmful effects comics fandom has had on our political system, the very heart of our democracy.

Contents include:

"GRADUATION AT SHETLAND HIGH" by TONY ISABELLA

"A DREAM OF FANDOM" by DWIGHT DECKER and JOE JENKINS

"NONE DARE CALL IT DITTO" by DWIGHT DECKER

"1000%" by JEFF ANDERON

Covers by MARK EVANIER and BRUCE SIMON

Help us fight the good fight and wipe out that merciless killer disease...comics fandom. Order TRUE FAN ADVENTURE THEATER #8. Only 60¢ from TCR Publications, 393 E. 58th Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11203. One size fits all.

Duffy's Tavern

DUFFY VOHLAND, PROPRIETOR

Just got back from a weekend jaunt with "The Gang" and thought that I'd better get my sass in the addle if I ever want to get this to Paul in time for the first issue. I don't know why I'm worrying about it already; Paul only wants it the day after tomorrow. (It wouldn't be so bad if I lived next door to him, but, since I happen to live a few states away, I am cutting it a wee bit close. Oh, well, I've been known to do more than my share of procrastinating, so he probably expected something like this from me.

Enough of this worthless prattle.. let's get on to some more serious stupidity (or whatever the stuff I write is called). So, onward and downwards...

A little while back, during one of our infrequent intelligent discussion periods, two of my fellow "Gang" members---Larry Brnicky and Dave Hartman came up with what we think would be a terrific storyline for Len Wein to use in an upcoming JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA.

It's not totally an out-of-the-blue fan suggestion because it sprang out of a discussion we were having about some of the ideas we had heard Len was actually toying with for the JLA's future. The one we were concentrating on at the time had to do with Len's plans for possibly killing one of the regular JLAers.

(In case you're interested, some of the ideas we had heard he supposedly has includes such things as using the lesser, or non-official members like METAMORPHO, the ELONGATED MAN, and ZATANNA more often; guest-starring, or possibly even making a member of, one or more of the heroes from the old Quality stable, like the RAY, the BLACK CONDOR or DOLLMAN. This idea--especially in the case of the RAY--we all love and we hope he does! Another idea involves bringing the RED TORNADO, who, according to the source of all this info, is not dead---if an android can ever really die---to Earth One and making him a member of the JLA. This idea we don't like. If the RED TORNADO is still "alive", he should stay with the JSA. And, of-course, the aforementioned plan of possibly killing one of the current members.)

According to our source of infomation, for reasons unknown, the probable candidate for death would be either GREEN ARROW or AQUAMAN with GA being the more likely of the two. We, "The Gang" say "No!" to both possibilities. GA is comics most realistic character and is too alive to die, and we think that AQUAMAN could carry his own magazine again if it were steered in the right direction. (say... an AQUAMAN encountering-alot-of-weird-undersea-civilizations format). But, in order to "save" these two we have to choose a replacement to go in their place. I don't remember the exact dialogue or anything, but we finally decided on GREEN LANTERN, and from sparks by Dave and Larry, came up with a plan whereby his death wouldn't hurt fans so much. No doubt many of you have already said, "No! Absolutely not!" to such a suggestion. But, please, hold your final verdict till after you've heard the whole thing.

The plan is not to kill the GREEN LANTERN character, but rather its current "real identity" of HAL JORDAN (who has, we think, out-lived his overall appeal as a character) and to officially replace it- vis an appearence by the GUARDIANS- with the character of JOHN STEWART who is official substitute GREEN LANTERN (as introduced in GL/GA #89).

Such a move would not only allow for a dramatic story in which a major character is killed (and stays dead!, by being given a replacement) but also acts as a lead - in for a wholenew kind of GL series starring STEWART as a black GREEN LANTERN (which could simply occupy the same space in the back of the FLASH that is now being filled by the JORDAN-GL. It would be unique, if for no other reason than the color bit--- just what in the world is a "black GREEN LANTERN" anyway??

Now that you've heard the whole idea, what do you think? True, it is a rather drastic idea, but the JLA is

a book that needs such drastic plots to help cover up the lack of a lot of characterization because of the number of people in each story. And I can see the death of HAL JORDAN being a possible springboard for several similar stories in different titles. The more I think about it, the more I like it; and the more I hope Len sees it and likes the ideas enough to use it. The story title? Why, "GREEN LANTERN IS DEAD; LONG LIVE GREEN LANTERN!"

Oh, and if Len is reading this, he might note that we ("the Gang" again) would also love to see a JLA story in which the RAY was revived and made a member of the group. And, ofcourse, I, singularly would like to see him induct—at least guest start for an issue—a certain Dearborn based, potentially great character by the name of ANIMAL MAN! (Hopefully, if I keep bringing up the subject of A-MAN someone at National, most likely Joe Orlando for ADVENTURE, I would think will revive him...if only to shut me up!!) Would anybody out there be in a position to do this happen to be listening? I've got my eyes crossed in hopes that there is...

Surprise of surprises! I actually received a little (very little, like two letters!) mail response from that "DT" I had in TCR #89.

I dunno. Either an awfully lot of you peeples didn't read that "tavern" or an awfully lot of you didn't listen to what I said. I'd prefer to think it was the former of the two, but, sorry to say, I seriously doubt it. Incase you've forgotten, I partially talked about fandom apathy. It would seem from the response I got that there definitely is such a disease permeating fandom and that talking about it doesn't do a helluva lot of good!

Anyway, one of the letters from a fan in New Jersey, named Guy Barbato, brought up something that I've wanted to talk about for a long time now. First, however, allow me to reprint the letter:

"Dear Duffy,

I hope you don't mind me calling you "Duffy", but first names are more personal and friendly.

I was reading your article in TCR #89 and was wondering if you could give me some advice. Some of my friends and I decided to get the comic fans in New Jersey together and start our own fanzine. We were wondering how to get started. For instance, where would we go to get artists, etc? Even well informed (comics wise) writers are hard to find.

Any help you can give us will be greatly appreciated. Thanks a lot."

Well, as far as where to find artists and writers, you just have to buy other zines, find those contributors whose work you like and get in touch with them via a letter.

However, the best possible advice I could give you is DON'T ATTEMPT PUBLISHING A ZINE...not yet. Now, I think it's absolutely fantastic that Guy and his friends are enthusiastic enough to want to publish a fanzine; it's just that I would be misdirecting their energies if I suggested that they go ahead with their plans.

Why?

Well, from the letter, I take it that Guy and his group are new to the ranks of fandom. (If I'm wrong, Guy, please let me know) I say this partly because of what he actually says in his letter: but even more so, because of how he says that they want to go about becoming an active part of fandom by publishing their own magazine.

I think that every fan ever in comics fandom has wanted to jump right in and do his own zine when he first joined its ranks. And, the majority of those who did, learned one important thing: to publish a zine of any degree of quality at all it takes, more than anything, time and patience on the part of the editor. Time, not towards the actual production of the zine itself, but rather time before a person should even think about doing a zine on his own. Time to gain the the knowledge one should have in fandom before (note that word again) he ventures into the zine publishing business.

It also takes experience. By this I mean rather than jumping right into the zine publishing thing (as has usually been the case in fandom) more likely than not turns out to be about 99% enthusiasm and about 1% printable material. A new fan should spend a good bit of time at first just buying fanzines, starting correspondences with other fans (both old and new) and other such---if you'll pardon the expression---"neo-fan activities". This way, one can learn all the basics of fandom. (One of the best ways for a neo to learn the ropes as quickly as possible, is for him to get a correspondence going with an established

fan and ask questions on fairly specific things like recommended fanzines, termminology, etc.)

After he's settled down a little and has had a fairly good taste of fandom in general, then he might start thinking about getting more involved----but still not by publishing his own zines! Instead, he should think along the lines of sending contributions to already established zines. If he likes to write....let him try writing. If he likes to draw...let him try drawing. But, he should try one or the other and not both because most people can develop skills in at least one of these two areas. (One thing though, he shouldn't start out trying to get into both areas at once; this stretches his facilities too thin and doesn't allow him to develop either of the abilities to it's full extent).

One important thing that any new fan should remember when he first starts trying to get his material accepted: Don't get discouraged! There are very few fans whose work is good enough at first to be accepted right off the bat, especially now. (I hit it lucky. My first article was accepted, by the Collector, but the overall quality of zines and standards of acceptance of contributions weren't nearly as high as they are now). So, every new fan should just keep at it until he does do something that is good enough to be accepted by the zine editor. And, once you get rolling, it just becomes a nice "Viscious" circle: the more you do and have accepted: the better you get; the better you get, the more demand there is for your work; and the more demand there is for your work, the more you do and get accepted.

Once you pretty well know your way around fandom, preferably at least having tried your hand at writing and or drawing, and, most importantly, know what is involved with publishing a zine (i.e. the time, money, effort, etc.) then think about whether or not you really want to publish a zine and could you do a good job.

So, to Guy and his friends, I would say try channeling your fan-energies into other things than zine publishing. Fandom can always use new artists and, even more, new writers. To the rest of you new members of fandom, I hoped that this has helped you too. And, to all of you "oldsters": I hope you haven't been too bored and thought that this was worth talking about for the sake of new fans.

It would seem that, as usual, I've ended writing up more than I had originally planned. (I hope Paul can, and wants to, find room for all of this. After all, he did say to make it as long as I liked. But, I guess I'd better call it quits for now or I'll be sure not to get this to him on time).

As always,I'd very much appreciate hearing from some of you (especially on the GREEN LANTERN thing. And by some, I don't mean one or two!! But just watch, I'll probably get a grand total of three! I'll leave you with this thought for the day: "A bird in the hand is worth very little nowadays!"

PAX!

SPANNER IN THE COGS CONT.

just to be able to think of what we had managed to do to conventions and The Rocket's Blast-Comicollector and and The Comic Book Price Guide and Nostalgia News and, dear sweet lawd, the whole of F*A*N*D*O*M!!!!!!!!!!!!!

So, the thing has been done, boys and girls, and Now It Can Be Told. Believe or disbelieve it as you will.

But, like I said, have you noticed any thing peculiar in dealer's rooms lately, heh heh??

SHOT IN THE DARK CONT.

intense fantasy when reduced and then printed. And the artwork takes up more of our field of vision at a time allowing us to sink deeper into this world than a 6" x 9" comic page can allow us. There is also the real need for characters with real human substance and room to develop them into sympathetic creatures. TARZAN allows merely for cardboard cut-outs of the common variety. And, finally, there is the need for more space per story. Kubert has already acknowledged this in taking four issues to adapt the first book. There needs to be room to establish more things than just pleasing visual continuities. Action is not everything!!

To sum up, TARZAN is part of our collective learning process. It is invaluable in putting our assets and liabilities into perspective so that constructive moves to push onward can be made.

As a science fiction and comics dealer I'm often asked to give authoritative verification of supposition, legend and doubt. And all to often, I'm made painfully aware of the narrow limits of my knowledge. I can, however, write with authority, without fear of contradiction, on one of the particular aspects of comic collecting: comic dealing in Singapore.

My interest in comic dealing began when I visited a second-hand bookshop and noticed a pile of second-hand comics. In those days, I did not know a SAD SACK from a FAMOUS FUNNIES but spent a few months rippling through the pile for any title, such as TOM AND JERRY, which might interest my son. No luck, but I did catch sight of a few titles from the Fawcett stable of which I hadn't heard-not surprisingly, since my own comic reading days of a quarter of a century earlier when I had been as au fait with the field as any Ditko fan of today.

After some days of considering the situation, I returned to the shop and bought up all the old titles I could find. I spent the remainder of the day visiting every bookstore and road side bookstall on the island, twenty-six in all, scattered over an area the size of the Isle of Wight. I filled my car with comics and after cataloguing them, no mean task, I was in business. I had some unique ideas of comic values in those days, listing a 1948 BLONDIE at 10/- and a 1947 CAPTAIN AMERICA at half that price.

The Singapore dealers had themselves an interesting method of pricing comics. Virtually all comics from a 1950 BATMAN in good condition to a month old SGT. FURY which was falling to pieces, were exactly the same price. Slightly higher priced were the newer, more popular range of Marvel superheroes, which, incidently, were banned in the Republic the following year. Within a very short time of my taking an intensive interest, comic prices began to soar. It appeared that there was this Englishman on the island who was crazy enough to pay the increased prices. And, unlike the majority of costumers, he did not follow the tradition of bargaining for the comics he bought and had even been known to amaze the storekeepers with a cheery, "Keep the change."

An example of a Chinese fairy tale comic. The original size of these comics is 2 3/4 x 3 1/4. They come six to eight in a box and have only full page illustrations. The story is told along the side.

It soon became evident that the majority of the more important dealers were buying their supplies of old comics from a single source. A little stringent footwork put me in contact with their supplier, a Chinese from the Katong district, who had soon relised that he was sitting on a steady source of income. We quickly came to a mutually beneficial agreement. I would call in every two or three weeks and he would give me firs refusal on any old comics he had managed to obtain in the interim, and ofcourse,I would pay an inflated price for anything I purchased.

I never did discover his sources. Nor those of the other dealers, for I naturally continued to look elsewhere too. Two or three months would sometimes drift by without my being able to obtain comics more than a year or two old and I would tell myself that I had finally denuded the island (as I really had done in the science fiction field within the first few months of arriving) and then, unexpectedly, a dealer would unearth twenty, thirty, or perhaps even forty Golden Age comics.

One dealer telephoned me without warning. "You want old comics?" he said. "I have." Two statements of fact. "What are they?" I asked. "You come see?" he said, "customer bring in. You want, you pay, I save." I agreed to go along and see them and pay a high price for any I bought. In the Orient, one makes a purchase according to a carefully laid - down set of never mentioned rules and one does not, at such a junction, rush out excitedly to examine the wares. One has to show disinterest. I managed to show disinterest for an entire twenty - four hours, and then rushed out excitedly. "I just happened to be passing," I told the shopkeeper, "so I thought I might as well call in." That's the way to play the game. He wasn't impressed. "I see if I still have 'em," he said with his experienced brand of one-upmanship.

In a considerably short time I had a monopoly of the entire island as far as being the middle - man between Singapore and organized fandom and I estimated that any comic coming into the market stood a 99% chance of passing into my hands.

I also tried hard to establish a similar monopoly with the comics circulating in Malaya, but there the pickings were erratic to say the least. There are two shops in Jahore Bahru which deal exclusively in Charlton romance titles. Malacca boasts the Riverside Book Shop whose few comics are offered at prices you wouldn't wish on a rival collector. Kuala Lumpur, the Federation's capital, must be able to claim the highest incidence of book shops per square mile in the entire world, making the tourist's conception of Charing Cross Road as bustling in comparision as the Gobi Desert. And not one of them deals in comics! In fact, I found only one which deals in anything other than Malay textbooks. But if you go down to Tek Soon Street in Penang you are assured of a big surprise. There are three or four well stocked comic stalls there and, as far as I know, inflation hasn't caught up with their prices. (They don't, incidentally, answer letters!).

Another example of the Chinese fairy tale comic.

The most amazing incident to befall a comic dealer occurred during the later part of my Singapore tour. I had been visiting my Singapore friend one evening and had parked down a darkened side-street. I had returned to my car and was about to insert the key into the lock when a voice in the darkness behind me said, "Excuse me, you are looking for comics?" I turned around to find facing me the tallest Chinese imaginable. He was a double for the Japanese wrestler in that old Cagney film, "Blood On The Sun". I admitted that I was interested and he told me that he had a large pile of pre- code horror comics for disposal. He verified his statement by naming some of the titles. "Come to my house and see them" he invited.

He piled them up on a table before me, and, as I examined them he kept pulling out different comics and putting them to one side. "This one I have not read...this one I'll keep for now", and so on. The pile began to dwindle alarmingly, forcing my hand. "How much do you want for them?" I asked. He named a figure twice as much as I'd estimated his ceiling price to be. I gasped. "Ah" he said, "I know you will pay this price. I have calculated that these comics are worth the price to you." "How do you know that?" He said, "Because I have followed you in different shops and know how much you have willingly paid for comics very much like these." Who could quibble with enterprise like that? I whipped around to a nearby store where Elizabeth was shopping for a new dress. "The money I gave you for the dress," I gasped, "Where is it?" The dress had to wait! CONT. PG.

FANDOM FORUM

NEAL POZNER

Fandom Forum by Neal Pozner??? Hold on a minute! Let's go a little slower, one thing at a time.

Fandom: "The loosely knit organization which reads, writes, and collects (comics)...any number can play!" ((From "The Neo-Fans Guide to Science Fiction Fandom", 1966 edition, edited by Bob Tucker)).

Now that that title's settled, on to an easier one: Forum. According to Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (New? My copy is dated 1953); "1. Rom. Antiq. The market place or public place of a city, center of judicial and public business. 2.Tribunal; court. 3. Hence, a public meeting place for open discussion."

So, that defines the title, Fandom Forum: A place for open discussion about and by the collectors of "funny books" (as Paul Levitz is so fond of calling them). Now comes the strange part. How about that "by Neal Pozner" part??? Who is he??? What makes him qualified to conduct a Fandom Forum?

Neal Pozner?

Well: Social Security number 098-44-7972. Batmanian number 573 (official Life-Time Number!). MMMS number 6773A (plus two others which I have since lost). RPO, TTB, QNS, KOF and FMM. Winner of two No-Prizes. Reader of comics for 13 years and collector for 9. Reader of fanzines for 8 years (on and off) and collector of them since 1967. Editor of my own zine, Shazam! The Wonderful World Of Comix! for almost four years now and Central Mailer and founder of NYAPA (New York Amateur Press Association). A member of the oldest and best amateur press associations in cmics fandom, which is now nearing its 100th mailing, CAPA-alpha. Artist, writer.

(When I told PK that I planned on making this column an introduction of sorts, telling of myself and my aims for this column, he said, "Well, that should take a paragraph or two." Little did he know...)

But now, let me go into a bit of detail on the last few items. (Even if you don't let me, I'll STILL go into a bit of detail!!).

My fanzine, Shazam! The Wonderful World of Comix!, is quite possibly one of the oldest existing fan-oriented publications of any quality currently on the scene. A few older zines include TCR, RBCC, Fantastic Fanzine, The Collector, Comic Crusader and a handful of others. It's creation resulted from my failure to get any of my artwork published by the quality fanzines of 1968 (for reasons I later saw as obvious). Determinded to get my work printed, I came up with my own fanzine, The Wonderful World of Comix, in the spring of that year. It featured what I considered my best art and writing from that period, as well as a few illustrations from some of my schoolmates. To put it briefly...it stank!

After much help, encouragement and criticism from friends, WWoC evolved to what I consider one of the best (if only) fanzines on the market. Let me clarify that. When I refer to fanzines, I mean magazines like the one you are now reading, by and for fans, not the prozines and artzines which are currently inundating the market.

In any case, the seventh issue of Shazam! WWoC (unfortunate timing on everyone's part ... I wanted to drop the WWoC in favor of another title, keeping the former as a subtitle so, I came up with Shazam! and officially introduced the title at the '72 Comic Art Convention in New York, the same time National announced its plans for a comic book called SHAZAM) will be out by the time you read this and should prove interesting if you are at all into fandom as a whole.

It's full of all sorts of goodies. For example, there is a lengthy interview with Carmine Infantino, discussing him, and his various roles as artist, writer, designer, editor and publisher and president of NPF. It covers a period of well over thirty years, and proves most interesting.

On the other hand, we have another interview (both, incidently, are illustrated by the person interviewed) with Billy Graham, formerly artist and Managing Editor for Warren Publications, and now artist on Marvel's HERO FOR HIRE. While not as long as the one with Carmine, this interview proves equally as revealing.

Also, there is an article on Newsdays Graphic Opinion political comic-strip along with examples of the strip, previously seen only in that

paper, by Barry Smith (three full page strips), Herb Trimpe, Steve Englehart and Gary Viscupic (staff artist for Newsday and the Science Fiction Book Club).

Mort Drucker, commercial artist and caricaturist for MAD, has a feature on advertising and animation. The article is profusely illustrated with unpublished examples of his advertising cartoons. We also have a giant poster by Mort of a concept he was working on (but never sold) for a Saturday morning cartoon show.

There are many articles slanted toward the fannish tastes, including another in the Phandom Stranger series by Jeff Anderson and a humorous article by Bernie Bubnis. On the more serious side, Howard Campbell asks, "Are The Comics Really An Art Form?", and much more in the way of text.

Front cover and much interior art is by Klaus Janson, back cover by Jack Kirby and Joe Sinnott, together for the first time since FANTASTIC FOUR #108, and as good as ever. Interior full- pagers by Rob Macintyre, Dave Cockrum, Gary Kato, Syd Shores and many others. On top of that we have William Black, Dennis Fujitake, Don Newton, William Payne, Jim Pinkoski, John Pound, Bill Stillwell and Ronn Sutton on our list of art contributors along with many others.

In short, if your preferences lie toward art, we feel we have what you are looking for. If you prefer articles, we consider ourselves one of the best variety-article zines. You name it, we've got it!!

So, in addition to Shazam! being one of the last refugees of the truely fannish (or faanish, depending on your preferences) mags...and we also have quality art and text.

Something for everyone!

I have also done a small amount of writing for fandom, much about fanzines verus prozines, appearing in zines such as Comic Fandom Monthly and The Creative Adventurer, among others. I don't intend to repeat myself here, but I do want to say that I encourage you all to look into prozines or fanzines before rejecting them.

I feel that my various involvements in virtually every type of fan oriented experience, as well as several years active duty in fandom, makes me qualified to write a Fandom Forum columns. Future columns will go into amateur press associations(APA's), conventions, fanzines, fans and pros, in short...the whole fannish scene. Unfortunately, these comments cannot help but be my opinions, although I will try to present both sides of the story whenever possible.

However, as the title implies, this will be a 'FORUM', not a soapbox. If any of you out there find yourself disagreeing with what I say, or have a point you feel should be brought up in a column of this sort, feel free to either write to me or the editor of this rag. I will run any well thought out opinions in this column. So, let yourself be heard!

After all...isn't that what it's all about?

GREAT CONAN IMITATORS CONT.

King Kong plotline with great skill and we find it very exciting and imaginative. It is peopled with an array of characters sometimes incredible, sometimes grotesque, sometimes humorous, sometimes heroic and sometimes really very ordinary. Yet in their own way they are all unique and are always believable. The story is of course a true epic and, though there are probably more dinosaurs than people in it, it concerns itself chiefly with its very human characters. And if you extract the above mentioned dinosaurs, plus a few other things, you'd think it was a historical novel along the lines of Ben-Hur.

Miss Gaskell has done a first rate job with this trilogy, and anyone who can juggle around with great skill barbarians, pteradactyls, bandits, wolves, witches, lecherous priests, amorous apemen, earthquakes, and even a mad scientist and his monster, and tack on at the end of the first volumne a bibliography that includes the Book of Genesis, deserves at least that much praise!

LORD OF HIS DOMAIN CONT.

I lay awake at night thinking about caches like that one. If, in Singapore and Penang, Golden Age comics can come to light with astonishing regularity in abundance, what can one find hidden away nearer to home? Just think....that little old lady living at the corner of the next street might have in her attic....

It isn't insomnia which keeps me awake at night...

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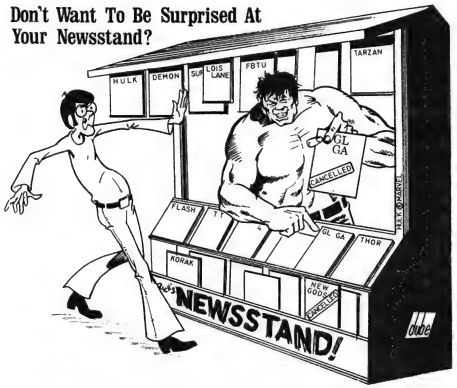

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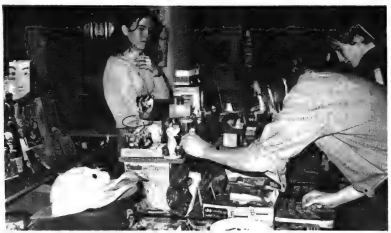
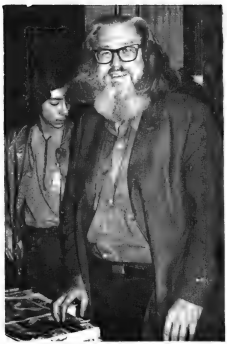
A LOOK AT

CREATION II- nov. 24-26

PHOTOS BY BRUCE MITTELMAN

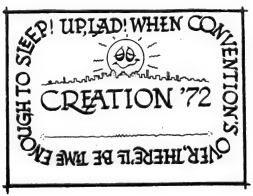
As soon as the doors openned at 12:30, the Penn Top Room filled with fans who tried to buy up everything in sight.





Bill Gaines, publisher of MAD and National's business consultant, stops to pose with "What--me worry?"

As usual, comics were not the only thing for sale at the convention. There were several tables like this one which dealt almost exclusively in premiums and novelty items.



Convention badge

Doug Murray presents Bill Gaines with an award for being the son of M.C. Gaines.

Philip Jose Farmer, noted s-f author, addresses the fans on Saturday afternoon.

Issac Asimov, renowned author of s-f and science fact, signs autographs for his many fans after his speech.

CONVENTION REPORT

The Second annual Thanksgiving con, Creation II, openned a mere half hour late on Friday, November 24. The doors of the Statler-Hilton's Penn Top Room, which served as the con's dealer's room, were stormed by several hundred fans at 12:30 or so, according to the folks at security, so it was decided that the Con should be opened to the public.

Creation II was organized by the same people who brought you Creation I, Adam Malin, Gary Berman and Jeff Glass, who did, I might add, a much better job this year than they did last time around.

At the time of this writing it is not known exactly how many people attended Creation, but security head Liam O'Connor estimates that there were between 1,500 and 2,000 fans and pro guests roaming around the eighteenth floor of the hotel.

And speaking of pro guests...

From the photos on the preceeding three pages you can see that there were many, many professional guests there. Aside from the dozen or so people whose photo appears, E. Nelson Bridwell, Al Williamson, Mark Hannerfeld, Elliot Maggin, Vaughn Bode, Jim Steranko, Marie Severin, Roy Krenkel, Tony Isabella, Dave Cockrum, Lin Carter and several more whom I either didn't see or whose name momentarily slips my mind.

As was said, the dealers room opened at 12:30 on Friday. Adam made his opening speech just before the hucksters room was stormed. After that, there were no special happenings until around 3:00 when everybody gathered in the eighteenth floor auditorium to hear the ACBA---only to find that there wasn't any ACBA panel and that, like the 2:00 panel before it (called "The Next Hundred Years"), it had been cancelled for Friday and rescheduled to Saturday night at 5:30.

The first half of Friday was pretty well screwed up. It wasn't until the panel for 4:00 (which actually started at 4:30, but, what the hell, at least the panel went off) on the Future of Space Flight began. This panel consisted of Kelly Freas (this years guest of honor), Philip Jose Farmer and Vaughn Bode. I didn't have the opportunity to go to this panel since I had to leave early, but I understand that it was an extremely interesting panel. And well it should have been! All three members of the panel knew all about what they were speaking of.

After that, at 6:30 (and believe it or not, this was on time), was the first of two auctions conducted by Al Schuster. According to the program given to us, the things auctioned off were "original art, ECs, BLBS". I guess you'll just have to take their word for it.

The remaining event of the day was the show at 8:00. The first nights films consisted of the usual type of con - films, such as KING KONG. The films shown the second night, however, were better, and some of them were slightly unusual ... even for a comic convention! NEVERMORE and DR. NO were the two feature length films. After that came excerpts from 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY and the special surprise movie ... reels one and two of GONE WITH THE WIND (?).

The dealers room closed at 8:00 on Friday (as well as on Saturday), and, unless you were going to stay for the films, that was enough con for one day.

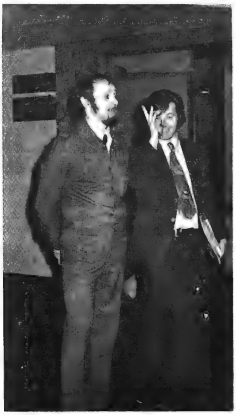
Saturday saw the Con opening on time (this fact threw most people off, and they actually had the nerve to expect the Con to open on time for the final day...little did they realize!!) at 10:00.

The first event listed in the program was "Guest of Honor- Kelly Freas and Philip Jose Farmer speeches" at 11:00. These came off at noon and they were both fairly interesting. Mr. Freas, the well known s-f illustrator, talked about his craft and where it was heading. Had it been cut to a slightly shorter length, it would have been much more enjoyable. It was, however, still a good speech.

Mr. Farmer, author of many books, including TARZAN ALIVE, THE MAD GOBLIN/ LORD OF THE TREES, and TO YOUR SCATTERED BODIES GO, spoke for a shorter amount of time and on the different types of fandoms that exist today and which are somehow related to comics fandom. Among tnose mentioned were flying saucer freaks, science fiction fans and pornography buffs (in fact, he even mentioned that he and some friends had once planned a Porncon to be held in Mexico ... he mentioned that some of the hotel accomodations would be out of this world!!).

The next panel, which took place at 1:00, was conducted by Issac Asimov who has authored such great books as THE FOUNDATION TRILOGY, THE CAVES OF STEEL, THE NAKED SUN, two volumnes of ROBOT stories and THE SENSUOUS DIRTY OLD MAN. The panel was called "Why You Should Read Science Fiction". This was another panel that I was not able to attend but it too was reported to be excellent.

The next panel, which came on at 2:00, was about the most interesting and fabulous one of the Con, was Vaughn Bode's Pictography. Bode showed color slides of his strips and read them aloud to the audience. The quality of Vaughn's work doesn't have to be explained to you if you ever saw his PURPLE PICTOGRAPHY or his CHEECH WIZARD. And if you haven't



Gray Morrow Neal Adams

Marv Wolfman Len Wein

...were there any pros?

JUST LOOK AT THESE...!

Below: The ACBA panel contained many more of the pros who attended the Con. From left to right we have: Mike Kalute, sorry...but I can't identify the next fellow (again, sorry), Howie Chaykin, Neal Adams (who acted as the panel's moderator), Steve Skeates, Steve Gerber, Alan Weiss and, all the way down on the far right, Steve Englehart

Gil Kane

seen it, well...it's your loss.

After the Bode slide show,at 4:00, came a panel with Kelly Freas, Gray Morrow and Jeff Jones on Oil Painting. Freas, Morrow and Jones discussed their art and answered questions from the audience.

At 5:30, there was an ACBA meeting which was closed to the public. This was the same ACBA meeting that was suppose to have been held on Friday.

6:00 saw the Creation awards which were awarded to Kelly Freas, Jeff Jones and Gray Morrow. The awards were for these men's contribution to the comic arts.

The second, and final, auction was held at 7:00. Again, the auction was conducted by Al Schuster and the same type of books, art, etc. was auctioned off as the day before.

At 8:00, the closing came of the Con's second day and the showing of films, the ones which I have already mentioned.

Sunday, the final day, the Con was supposed to have opened at 10:00 but due to the great efficency of the Hilton's crack clean-up crew and the fact that only about half the dealers were there on time, Creation openned an hour late.

The final day featured three very interesting panels.

The first one was the Al Williamson-Jim Steranko Hour which started at noon. This was a very good panel were Jim and Al talked for a while and than answered questions from the audience.

At 1:30, Lin Carter and Philip Jose Farmer discussed Where is the Borderline Between Science Fiction and Fantasy? I was at this panel and I found it extremely fascinating. It was, unfortunately, cut short when some people did not find it equally fascinating and they got up to leave. Mr. Carter and Mr. Farmer then answered four or five questions and the panel was over.

A panel discussion between Comic Book Writers at 3:00 turned into an hour long question and answer period. There were a few interesting questions asked of Len Wein,Steve Gerber, Steve Englehart and Marvin Wolfman However, a majority of the questions were typical, dumb-fan questions but Len, Marv, Steve and Steve answered them all as well as they could and to the best of their knowledge.

That was it for the Con as far as panels went. For the most part, they were good panels and speeches. Adam had his people schedule the right pros and they were all gracious enough to consent to appear on these panels.

As far as dealers room activity went, Creation II was a bigger success than Creation I. The Penn Top Room contained 118 tables and some 60 -some-odd dealers. There were plenty of good deals and much to be bought in the way of comics, books, premiums and just about anything else.

There were few hitches in the running of the Con. The security staff did an excellent job and rip-offs were at an absolute minimum. There were a few screw - ups at the admissions table when a few people were put at the door who didn't quite know who was who. Because of this, there were a few funny incidents. Like;

Al Williamson was not allowed past the front desk because he was wearing the wrong color badge!

One dealer had a $100 Buck Rogers item stolen. The security people at the door searched Neal Adams for it.

After the dealers room closed at 6:00 on Sunday, people who were not dealers were thrown out. Somebody threw E. Nelson Bridwell out of the room!

Cute, huh?

Paul Kupperberg

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THE MARVEL AGE OF COMEDIES

By now we all must have heard, by way of the fandom grapevine, about the changes to come over the Marvel Comics Group. Whispers have crossed the nation and fans from coast to coast have been stunned by the news. All of fandom knows of the many revolutionary steps Marvel has taken these past ten years, but no one expected the Bullpen to decide in favor of an over-haul of parts of its line. Especially in the way they are going about it!

For those of you who do not subscribe to the American Telephone and Tel-A-Fan service and are therefore ignorant of the changes I am implying let me enlighten you. The first of the departures from the normal trend of Marvel Comics is the (ahem) departure of JOHNNY from the FANTASTIC FOUR so that he may rejoin his INHUMAN sweetheart, CRYSTAL. Upon recovering his gal, JOHNNY proposes.

Change Number Two: CRYSTAL turns JOHNNY down. She cannot marry him for she is wed to another. Dumbfounded, the HUMAN TORCH learns that her betrothed is the AVENGER, QUICKSILVER.

Now stop laughing! I am serious! Besides, I'm not through!

The Third Change: You know how SUE RICHARDS has been rather upset with husband REED lately? Well, she too, like her young brother, takes leave of the FANTASTIC FOUR. You probably half expected it, but how about this: SUE finds her way to THE DEFENDERS and joins that newly formed group. Puzzled, are you? Amazed? I must admit that I was at hearing that bit of news.

Fourth Change: MEDUSA enlists in the FANTASTIC FOUR and when JOHNNY returns, the ranks are once more full.

What I have related to you could be true...but then again, it could be false due to the last minute changes before the scripts are written. Comic book folk are strange people. So, no matter which way you choose to view these strange revelations, try to appreciate the odd and weird flavor they have. It is not every company that would be willing to revamp its major magazines in such a radical manner. I suppose that it would only be a matter of time before Marvel would start changing the normal trend of events in the rest of their line. Imagine what could happen...

Yes, imagine.

The scene is the New York State Supreme Cort in lower Manhattan where a decision from the lower New York City Courts is being contested. Here is to be decided the fate of the marriage between REED RICHARDS and SUSAN STORM RICHARDS. The courts audience believes that Mrs. RICHARDS is fighting an uphill battle. You can easily tell by their hushed whispers. They have read the accounts of the first court's proceedings and they are firmly convinced that the decision to grant Professor RICHARDS a divorce would not be reversed. As the trial begins, the emminent scientist is called upon to cite his reasons for requesting a divorce. The greying super-hero reads his complaints from a prepared list: Mrs. RICHARDS walked out on their marriage; she took up association with a group of people consisting of a green-hued monster an occultist, a silver-plated alien and a fish - man; the latter of which is known to have been a past lover of Mrs. RICHARDS. Furthur testimony is given by both sides, but the lower decision is upheld. REED gets ownership of all properties that were his prior to the marriage. On the basis that a person with her skills would have no problem remaining financially secure, all that SUE recieves is custody of FRANKLIN.

Imagine. But let us take this even furthur...

WANDA decides that if PIETRO can get married, so can she. The Hex Mistress throws herself upon the VISION at her earliest opportunity. Will

he accept her? I do not see why he should not. Even Roy Thomas has stated that the VISION is fully operational.

Dorie Evans picks up JOHNNY on the rebound. She always liked his X-KE Jaguar.

BEN GRIMM, caught up by the rash of marital development, pops the question to ALICIA. She accepts, but only if her step-father, the Puppet Master gets to give her away.

SUB-MARINER proposes to SUE, but finds that once again someone has beaten him to her: DRAGON MAN!

The VISION, confronted by the love sick SCARLET WITCH, logically turns her down. She is dumbstruck...and in her moment of grief, HAWKEYE proposes. She accepts!!

PROFESSOR X dies...again!

Betty Brant finally marries Ned Leeds.

As the newlyweds prepare to leave the wedding ceremonies, the Puppet Master is seen presenting his daughter with an orange, lumpy puppet. Happy honeymoon!!

Boris, Doctor Doom's trusty servant, mistakenly sends his lord's armored suit too an Earl Scheib Automobile Paint Shop.

"Should there be any here now who knows why the marriage of HAWKEYE and WANDA should not be consumated, let him speak now, or forever hold his peace."

"I do," cries the BLACK WIDOW. From within a blanketed bundle in her arms comes the goo's and gah's of a baby.

A figure resembling that of IRON MAN is reported walking around LATVERIA.

PRINCE NAMOR is doubly shocked to find that not only has LADY DORMA returned to life, but so has PROFESSOR X...and the two reincarnates are married.

HAWKEYE asserts that just because his alleged child is blonde, he should not be named the father. "I'm not the only blond-haired archer around, y'know!"

GALACTUS opens up a used car lot at the corner of Ralph Avenue and Claredon Road in Brooklyn. ((an inside joke))

DOCTOR STRANGE hires THOR as the first beautician for his salon.

CONAN dates FAFNIR (after returning to life, of course!). I always thought that the Cimmerian's hair was long because he was...well, strange. To say the least.

Pounding again and again, the SILVER SURFER finally breaks through the invisible barrier that has prevented him from returning to his native world and sweetheart. Alighting on his home world, he seeks out SHALLA BAL. The SURFER enters her apartment and calls out for her. There is some commotion in a room further back into the apartment and presently, she appears. Her futuristic tunic is halfway buttoned up. Her hair is dishevelled. Her lipstick is smeared. The SILVER SURFER stares dumbfoundedly. Eventually, overcoming his disbelief, he asks, "Dearest, have you forsaken me for another?"

SHALLA BAL remains silent, avoiding the SURFER's stare. A rear door opens and in walks the BLACK RACER in a somewhat similar state of undress.

"She sho' has, Whitey!"

Will imaginations ever cease?

BREAKDOWN CONT.

GWW: Certainly, Mr. Kirbanko. What is it?

K: Ain't you a little old to be reading funnybooks?

* *

Alas, I'm afraid the day will never arrive when such an interview sees print.

Unless some idiot decides to accept this first installment of BREAKDOWN for his fanzine...

WANDERING FAN CONT.

of money in the nude. He loves to dive into it like a dolphin, burrow through it like a gopher, and toss it up and let it hit him on the head.

Also, a special article on the care and feeding of Paul Kupperberg. How can you pass TRUE FAN ADVENTURE THEATER up?

Have I filled the blank pages yet. Paul?

New and Recommended

BY LIAM O'CONNER

NEW AND RECOMMENDED is going to be a regular feature in ETCETERA. The main purpose of this column is to offer reviews of new fanzines, books, magazines, etc., in short, anything that we feel is worthy of your attention will be presented here. In the future, the material reviewed will be more recent. Due to deadline hassles and the like, reviewer Liam O'Connor had to take older fanzines from his own collection to review. The new Warren book is the latest thing listed. If you'd like to have your fanzine reviewed in this column, please send a copy to the ETCETERA address and state on the copy that it is for review purposes. We reserve the right to review only the fanzines that we deem worthy of mention. Thank you.
Paul

GRAPHIC STORY WORLD; Richard Kyle, P.O. Box 16168, Long Beach, Calif., 90806. 6 issues/$3.

This is a good review and article zine and it often contains several interesting articles and the like.

The formal contents do vary from issue to issue. In one issue, you may get an interview with somebody of interest and then another issue has a long history of a comic hero.

Newsworld is their news section which covers comics and undergrounds. Unfortunately Kyle has a tendency to print either wrong information or rumor. Otherwise, the column is of a certain amount of interest.

GRAPHIC STORY WORLD also includes in-depth reviews of fanzines, books and foreign comic books. Shel Dorf and John Benson are regular contributors to GSW.

GSW is a very nice zine from the graphic stand-point. It is typeset and very well put together. A sub runs 6 issues for $3.

* *

EC PORTFOLIO TWO; Russ Cochran, Route One, Apel, Iowa, 50003. $15.

EC PORTFOLIO TWO is a fantastic collection of black and white reproductions of some classic EC stories. It is, in a word, GREAT!

The size is 11½ x 16, (a real big gie). The reproductions are the same size as the original art was for the stories.

The stories reprinted are SQUEEZE PLAY by Frank Frazetta and Al Feldstein (this story also appeared in color in THE EC HORROR LIBRARY), AIR BURST by Harvey Kurtzman, LET'S PLAY POISON by Al Feldstein from Ray Bradbury and Jack Davis, THE FLYING MACHINE by Al Feldstein and taken from Ray Bradbury and Bernie Krigstein, OLD SOLDIERS NEVER DIE by Harvey Kurtzman and Wally Wood, and THUNDERJET by Harvey Kurtzman and Alex Toth.

The book's covers are the Frazetta cover from WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY #29, and is presented with only some minor artistic changes and printed in beautiful FULL color.

While the price is high, EC PORTFOLIO is well worth every cent of its fifteen dollar price tag. It is, I think, a real collector's item.

* *

THE STERANKO HISTORY OF COMICS- VOL. TWO; Supergraphics, Box 445, Wyomissing, Pa., 19610.

The STERANKO HISTORY is the definitive history of comics. Volume one has been acclaimed by pros and fans alike as "Great!", but Volume two is even better!

In this volume, Jim covers CAPTAIN MARVEL in a chapter entitled SHAZAM!. It includes everything you've always wanted to know about the BIG RED CHEESE, but didn't know of anybody who knew enough about him to answer your questions. This chapter has the whole story of the SUPERMAN - CAPTAIN MARVEL legal battle, including excerpts from court transcripts, numerous cover repros from WHIZ and CAPTAIN MARVEL and much more.

LIGHTENING STRIKES TWICE...OR, PLAY IT AGAIN SHAZAM! which tells of the other Marvel family characters. We get, of course, more cover repros and other goodies (including some full page Jack Binder and Mac Raboy art).

Of course, to list in detail all the chapters in this 128 page book would take forever. So, I'll just name the

others and tell you about the two best chapters in the book.

THE COSTUMED CO-STARS is about the lesser known back-up feature characters. HAWK-A-A-A! is the story of BLACKHAWK and his men (with full page illos by Reed Crandall). THE FLYING HEROES covers the ariel heroes from the Fawcett line. THE BIG SUPER HERO SHOW covers the Quality heroes with Crandell and Lou Fine illos.

The final two chapters in the book are THE LONG ARM OF THE LAW and SUNDAY MATINEE IDOL. The former is on PLASTIC MAN and his creator, Jack Cole. This chapter is more on Cole than his creation and is really a very personal chapter and you get too know the man Jack Cole as more than a signature on a comic book story. In fact, it almost brings tears to your eyes when you read that, on August 15, 1958, this man, for no apparent reason, felt that he should take his life...and that with a .22 pistol, he did just that.

The final chapter in the book is on the greatest comic strip ever... THE SPIRIT by Will Eisner. This is really a great chapter, and, aside from an unpublished, full pager by Eisner of THE SPIRIT, and the information given us about Eisner and his great strip, we get a reprint of a 1948 SPIRIT Sunday section! That, my friends, is the FINAL kick!!

This book is a must on anybody's buying list and is worth at least twice the five dollar price tag (if you're ordering from the address above, please include an additional 40¢ for postage and handling).

* *

DRACULA is the newest book from James Warren and company. It is, as far as art goes, a fantastic book.

The art in DRACULA is not new. It has appeared in an English magazine and Warren bought up the rights to the strips and put them all together into this 120 page, 9 x 12, square-bound book.

DRACULA contains twenty-two, absolutely beautifully colored and drawn stories. There are six strips by Estaban Moroto called WOLFF, which is a sword and sorcery type strip with the hero sort of resembling DAX, (Moroto's strip in EERIE). A two part gothic story of SIR LEO is by Jose Bea. Solsona contributes three stories of AGAR AGAR, a weird type of fantasy. Aside from these three series, DRACULA also contains eleven other stories by different people.

DRACULA's color is absolutely out of this world. It is FULL color--- not the usual four color we're used to in comics. Graphically, the book is great. However, the stories leave something to be desired. They lack a certain element that makes them come together in just the right way.

Is DRACULA worth five dollars?

Well, if you dig pretty pictures but don't care to much for a story, than the answer is, Yes! However, if you're one of those people who want something to read for your five bucks than the answer is, No!

Anyway, take a look at the book and judge for yourself. It is, as I understand, a bookstore item, but I'm sure that Warren will be selling it through his other magazines.

---Howard Kaye

* *

THE PHANTOM by Lee Falk; published by Avon Books, 959 Eighth Ave., New York N.Y., 10019. 75¢, #V2460 (add 10¢ for shipping costs).

Whew!!

This is one hell of a book. It is the complete story of The PHANTOM, The Ghost Who Walks. And when I say complete...I mean it!

Mr. Falk, who created The PHANTOM in 1936, has taken the adventures of his world famous creation and put them all into book form. It is a really complete 'biography' of The Ghost Who Walks. It goes over some of the episodes in the life of the first twenty PHANTOMS, but it basically concerns the life of the PHANTOM that exists today. From the time of his birth, to the eve of his father's death, we follow the life of young KIT WALKER (for The Ghost Who Walks) and his experiences in life.

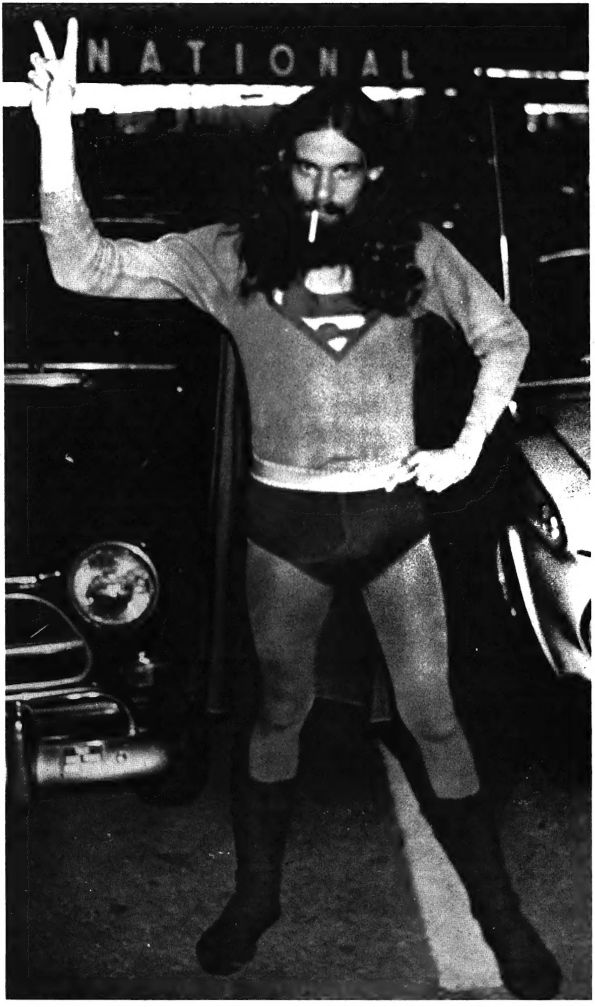
All the secrets of The PHANTOM line are shown in this book, and it goes over every phase of his life.

Mr. Falk's writing ability surprised me greatly. I found it hard to believe that a person so used to writing things in the style of the comics to be able to adapt to the way of novels. However, Mr. Falk made the transformation very nicely.

I might add, that aside from the good contents, THE STORY OF THE PHANTOM features a beautiful oil painting cover by a G. Wilson.

Anyway, get this book. It is really nice to see a novel about a comic strip character done right!!

---Howard Kaye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Trek, a historical article by Tom Fagan, another fe
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